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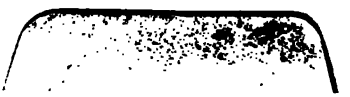

Ancient Classics for English Readers

EDITED BY THE

REV. W. LUCAS COLLINS, M.A.

(*SUPPLEMENTARY SERIES.*)

Vol. 3.

CATULLUS, TIBULLUS,

AND

PROPERTIUS

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CATULLUS, TIBULLUS,

AND

PROPERTIUS

BY THE

REV. JAMES DAVIES, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF HEREFORD CATHEDRAL;
FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF LINCOLN
COLLEGE, OXFORD

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PREFACE.

In the following chapters special acknowledgment is due to Mr Theodore Martin for numberless extracts from his admirable and now perfected version of Catullus; and an almost equal debt has been incurred to Dr James Cranstoun by loans on his Tibullus and Propertius, both of them scholarly performances, and at present the most adequate English versions of those poets in a complete form. Through the kindness of friends, and the publicity of reviews, some variety has been imparted to the translations—*e.g.*, in poems of Catullus rendered by Mr R. Doddridge Blackmore, the author of 'Lorna Doone;' in the "Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis," a portion of which has been given in a free translation by the Rev. A. C. Auchmuty; and in pieces of Catullus and Propertius, borrowed from Hummel and Brodribb's 'Lays from Latin Lyres' (1876: Longmans); and from the late Sir Edmund Head's 'Ballads and

Poems' (Smith & Elder: 1868), in which the translations of Propertius are sadly too few. In the course of the work the writer has found that it is perfectly vain to expect the reader to take kindly to the versions of Professor Robinson Ellis; but he may tolerate the few that are given for their exact literality and evident scholarship. Mr Paley's versions, where they have been used, will be found to combine poetic feeling with these merits. It has seemed well to designate all the versions of the three poets for which the author of the volume is himself responsible with the letter "D.;" and he desires to plead for these not so much a claim of superiority to other versions, as a scruple to avail himself of the honey of other bees, without samples and contributions from his own hive. There is room for even more workers in this special field of translation; and the volume will have done good if it inspires a friendly rivalry in rendering three specially delightful poets into congenial English.

J. D.

Moor Court, *September* 1, 1876.

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CATULLUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF VALERIUS CATULLUS.

VALERIUS CATULLUS—about whose prænomen there is no evidence to show whether it was Caius or Quintus, and need be still less concern, as wherever the poet speaks of himself in his poems it is by his surname Catullus—was born at Verona B.C. 87, and died, it is probable, in B.C. 54 or 53. Like the two somewhat later elegiac poets usually associated with him, his life and flower were brief; but there is internal evidence to prove that he was alive after B.C. 57, his death-date in the Eusebian Chronicle; and the silence of his muse as to public events immediately subsequent to 54 B.C., the death of Clodius in 52, and the civil wars in 49-47 amongst the number, forbids the probability that he attained a longer span than some thirty-four years. A colour has been sought to be given to a later date from the supposed mention in

Poem lii. of the *actual consulship* of Vatinius in B.C. 47; but it is clear from Cicero that that worthy whilst ascending the ladder of office had a habit of enforcing his affirmations by the oath, "as sure as I shall be consul," * and so that the poet ridiculed a mere prospect, and not an accomplished fact—

> "Vatinius—what that caitiff dares!—
> By when he shall be consul swears!"

Similarly, the argument for a much later date than 57 B.C. for Catullus's lampoons on Cæsar and Mamurra may as well be used on the other side, as it is obvious that such attacks would be on all accounts subdued after the Dictatorship was established, though policy and statesmanship doubtless counsel ignorance or oversight of such petty and ephemeral warfare. On the whole, it should seem that there are allusions in the poems of Catullus which must have been written in B.C. 54 and in 53,† but scarcely a shadow of any grounds for believing him to have survived the later of these dates.

Beyond the birth-date, we have literally no souvenirs of the childhood or early youth of Catullus, for he has recorded scarcely any *admonitus locorum*, like Horace, and does not deal in playfully-described miracles to

* Cic. in Vatin. Interrog., 2. 6. 5. 11.

† Some allusions in C. xii. to Furius and Aurelius, and in C. xxix., are later than Cæsar's invasion of Britain in B.C. 55; and C. liii. is an epigram based on a speech of Licinius Calvus against Vatinius, whom Cicero at Cæsar's instance defended in *B.C. 54.*

herald the advent of a "divine poet." Born at Verona, an important town of Transpadane Gaul on the river Athesis, which became a Latin colony in 89 B.C., and one of the finest cities in that part of Italy, he was by family and antecedents essentially Roman, and in education and tastes must be regarded as emphatically a town-bird. There is nothing to lead to the impression that he had the keen eye of Virgil for the natural and sylvan beauties of his birthplace and its environs, no special mention of its wine, apples, or spelt. He does not indeed utterly ignore the locality, for one of his most graceful pieces is a rapture about Sirmio (C. xxxi.), where he possessed a villa, no great distance from Verona, on the shores of the Lago di Garda. Hither in his manhood he returned for solace after trouble and disappointment; but it was probably rather with a craving for rest than from the love of nature, which is not a key-note of his life or poetry. His removal to Rome at an early age for his education must have begun the weaning process; and though Verona had its "capital in little," its importance, still witnessed by the remains of an amphitheatre more perfect though smaller than the Colosseum, its medley of inhabitants from the east and west, with a fair share of culture and urbanity, in spite of the infusion of barbarism which Cicero complained had reached even Rome with the "breeks" of the peoples from beyond the Alps, it is easy to conceive that Catullus soon contracted a preference for the capital, and was fain to quiz the provincials of his original home, though he seems to have retained

not a few acquaintances and family ties amongst them. Such ties, as is seen in the cases of Catullus and Horace, were stronger in the provinces than in Rome; and we shall see anon that the former was influenced by the tenderest and most touching fraternal affection; but the charms of a residence at Rome, from the school-boy period up to his brief life's end, asserted a power which was rarely interrupted by rustication or foreign travel; and he cannot herein be accused of the volatility or changeableness which characterised others of his craft and country. This would be a power certain to grow with years, and the more so as books, society, culture, were accumulated in the capital. "At Rome," wrote the poet to Manlius—

> "Alone I live, alone my studies ply,
> And there my treasures are, my haunts, my home."

It is little more than guess-work to speculate on the rank and calling of Catullus's father. From the life of Julius Cæsar by Suetonius we gather that he was on terms of intimacy with, and a frequent host of, that great man; and it is not improbable that he and the son who died in Asia Minor may have been merchants, though the death in question would consist as well with the surmise that Catullus's brother was on some prætor's staff. Attempts have been made to establish against the poet himself a charge of impecuniousness and wastefulness; but "the cobwebs in his purse" in the invitation to Fabullus (C. xiii.) are a figure of speech which need not be literally interpreted; his allusions in C. xi., "Concerning Varus's Mistress," to a

scanty exchequer and shabby equipment whilst in the suite of Memmius in Bithynia, cut rather at that ill-conditioned and illiberal prætor than himself; and as to the *jeu d'esprit* about the "Mortgage," it makes all the difference of *meum* and *tuum* whether we read of "your" or "my" country-seat as the snug tenement, as to which the poet tells Furius-

> "That there's a mortgage, I've been told,
> About it wound so neatly,
> That, ere this new moon shall be old,
> 'Twill sweep it off completely."—(C. xxvi.)

Some possible colour for the suspicion is indeed found in the fact that on occasion—like other young men about town—Catullus sought to improve his finances, and so—like other young men—joined the suite of the prætor, Caius Memmius, in Bithynia, attracted by the literary prestige of that governor, who was the friend and patron of Lucretius. From him, however, he derived nothing but disappointment. Memmius did not enrich his own coffers: his suite, if we may judge by Catullus, did not recoup their outfit; but, on the contrary, might have stood as a warning to other would-be fortune-menders for the nonce, as the poet points the simile—

> "Like me, who following about
> My prætor—was—in fact, cleaned out."—(C. xxviii.)

But with regard to the poet's general finances we have certainly no reason, from his remains, to suppose that he was habitually out at elbows. On the contrary,

we know that he had two country-houses,—one at the Lago di Garda (which some have thought is still represented by the ruins of a considerable edifice at the extremity of the promontory on its southern shore, though later discoveries show that these are remains of baths of the date of Constantine, to say nothing of their extent being out of keeping with a poet's villa); and the other in the suburb of Tibur, where was his Tiburtine, or, as his ill-wishers called it, to tease him, his Sabine Farm (C. xliv.) Add to these a house and library at Rome, of which he wrote, as we have seen above, to Manlius, and an estate which he owed to the bounty of a friend, and of which little more is known than that it included amongst other goods and chattels a housekeeper;* and we shall determine that Catullus was probably in nowise amenable to the charge of being a spendthrift or "distrest poet," but rather a man of good average means, in fair circumstances and good society. For the latter it is plain that his education would have fitted him. Though he had not, like Horace, the advantage of a Greek sojourn to give it finish and polish, he had enjoyed what was then at a premium in Latin towns even more than at Rome, a thorough introduction to Greek literature. Herein he laid the foundations of that deep familiarity with the Alexandrian poets, which, in common with his brother elegiast, Propertius, but perhaps with special manipulation all his own, characterises his other than erotic poetry. It is possible that the imitations of Alexan-

* "To my domains he set an ampler bound,
And unto me a home and *mistress* gave."

drine poetry may have been his earliest poetic efforts, but the more natural supposition is that his earliest verses are inspired rather by the taverns and lounges of Roman or Veronese resort than by the schools; and if so, an early date would be assigned to "Colonia, its Old Bridge, and the Stupid Husband" (C. xvii.), the poem about a "Babbling Door," the "Mortgage," and other like squibs and *jeux d'esprit*. The lack of what, to the accomplished Roman of the highest rank, was tantamount to a college education at Athens, Catullus made up later on by what is also a modern equivalent —foreign travel. After his bootless winter in Bithynia, he chartered a yacht and started on a tour amidst the isles of the Archipelago, after having first done the cities of Asia. And so up the Ionian and Adriatic he sailed home to the Lago di Garda and Sirmio, furnished, doubtless, with poetic material and fancy suggested by his voyage, and fitted more than ever for the intercourse of those literary men at Rome whose friendship he enjoyed in his mature life,—if we may use such an expression of one who died at thirty-four. Among these were Pollio, Calvus, Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, with whom to have been on terms of intimacy is a distinct set-off against an acquaintance with some scores of lighter and looser associates. It is only imperfect acquaintance with the poems of Catullus that sets up his image as that of a mere Anacreontic poet, a light jester and voluptuary, who could not be earnest but when his jealousy was roused by his beauteous bane—his Lesbia. The finished grace of his poetic compliments to such historic Romans as those we have

just named may be set beside the touching and pathetic poem to his brother as proofs of his exquisite command of very different veins, although in his hours of youthful gaiety he could throw off light lays on passing tittle-tattle, or chronicle adventures more or less scandalous and licentious. His claim to permanent honour as a poet rests upon the depths of intense feeling which, whether in light love (if his love for Lesbia can ever be so called) or in brotherly affection, as shown in his lament for his brother's death in the Troad, well up to the sound of the plaintive lyre. It is pretty fully settled that this brother's death did not synchronise with the poet's voyage to Bithynia. Had it been so, would he not surely, as Mr Theodore Martin has observed, have linked a fond memory of their joint boyhood with his ode on return to Sirmio? The times and seasons were distinct, but Catullus made a set pilgrimage to his brother's grave on the Rhætean headland; and to this landmark, as it were, of his life, this heartbreaking journey, and the desolation of the home to which he returned, must be referred his sad lines to Hortalus, Manlius, and Cornificius. If to this we add the late realisation of Lesbia's utter wantonry (a chapter in the poet's history which, as influencing it beyond all others, deserves to be treated separately and at length), it is made clear that his youthful spirits may by this time have been deserting the sensitive and saddened Catullus; and though there is no distinct record of his death, the inference is justifiable that accumulated bereavements and the rupture of tenderest ties, rather than the

effects of habitual profligacy, brought to a premature death the richly-gifted and learned Veronese songster, whom Ovid in his "Amores" bids meet another early-taken bard — Tibullus — his youthful temples ivy-crowned, in the Elysian valley. It is surely with his riper years (perhaps about 61 or 60 B.C.), and not with those when he was more fickle and in the heyday of young blood, that we should connect his passion for Lesbia. Tired, perhaps, of light loves, which left only their bitterness behind, he had dreamed—though it was an empty and ill-founded dream—of a more enduring connection with this most beautiful and graceless of Roman matrons. This idol shattered, its worshipper undeceived, and the brother whom he loved with a pure affection torn from him by an untimely death, Catullus has little more in the way of a landmark for the biographer. Between these events and his death-date, whether we take that as 57 or 54 B.C., there was time for tender regrets, occasional alternations between palinodes and professions of forgiveness, presentiments of coming fate, and more direct facing of premature death. Time also, as to our good fortune he discovered, for collecting the volume of his poems, which he fitly dedicated to Cornelius Nepos, and forwarded to him in a highly-finished dainty copy, "purfled," as one translator expresses it, "glossily, fresh with ashy pumice." It is a happy sample of his ideal of poetic compliment, and apologetically excuses the boldness of offering so slender an equivalent for the historian's three volumes (which have not survived) of Italian history. The first verse illustrates the binding and

preparing of a Roman presentation copy. The last points the contrast of a sort of Diomede and Glaucus exchange with a lurking esteem for his own professedly inadequate gift :—

> "Great Jove, what lore, what labour there!
> Then take this little book, whate'er
> Of good or bad it store;
> And grant, oh guardian Muse, that it
> May keep the flavour of its wit
> A century or more!"—M.

Before proceeding to examine the extant poetry of Catullus upon the principle of division into groups, it is fair to him to say a few words in deprecation of the character for licentiousness of life and poetry under which it has been his misfortune to suffer amongst moderns. It ought to be taken into account that the standard of morals in his day was extremely low; vice and profligacy walking abroad barefaced, and some fresh scandal in high places—amidst the consul's suite and the victorious general's retinue—being bruited abroad as day succeeded day. A poet who moved in the world and had gained the repute of a smart hitter at the foibles and escapades of his neighbours, whilst himself hot-blooded, impetuous, fearless, and impatient of the restraints of society, was not unlikely to become the object of some such general charges as we find from C. xvi., that Aurelius and Furius circulated against Catullus. And to our apprehension the defence of the poet—

> "True poets should be chaste, I know,
> But wherefore should their lines be so?"—

seems like begging the question, and scarcely a high tone of self-justification. Indeed, his retort is not simply turning the tables, as he might have done, on his maligners, but somewhat unnecessarily defending his life at the expense of his writings. This, it is probable, has acted in his disfavour. Excepting a few extremely personal and scurrilous epigrams and skits, it is not easy to pick out in the poetry of Catullus a greater looseness of language than in that of his Augustan successors; whilst as compared with his contemporaries in high places and public life, his moral conduct might have passed for fairly decent. What most concerns the modern reader is that after abatements and omissions of what is more or less unpresentable, there remains so much of a more refined standard of poetry and manners, so much tenderness in pure affection and friendship, so much, we might almost say, chivalry and forgivingness in the treatment of more questionable objects of his passion, that we are won to condonation of the evil which is that of the time and society for the charm and ideal refinement of the genius which is specially his own. The standard of purity and morals has, we know, risen and fallen in modern times and nations; and a severe "index expurgatorius" should ban our Herricks, Moores, and Byrons—nay, even Burns; but unless a sponge is to wipe out for the sake of a few blots a body of true poetry, rare in form and singularly rich in talent and grace, and a hard and fast rule is to condemn bitter and sweet alike, it is to be hoped that a fairer insight into the poetry of Catullus, attainable

through the blameless medium of at least one excellent translation, will enable English readers to judge how much of the prejudice attaching to the name of Catullus is without foundation, and how rich and original is the freshness and vivacity of his muse. It is no little gain to feel that in this genius we have "not only one of the very few writers who on one or two occasions speaks directly from the heart," but one entitled to the much more comprehensive praise, as has been shown by Professor Sellar, of "a wonderful sincerity in all the poems, by means of which the whole nature of the poet, in its better and worse features, is revealed to us as if he were our contemporary." *

* Roman Poets of the Republic, p. 342.

CHAPTER II.

CATULLUS AND LESBIA.

ALTHOUGH chronology would plead for the postponement till much later of the record of Catullus's love-fever, and it might seem more in order to set first the floating epigrams and occasional pieces which treat of town or country jokes, witticisms, *petits soupers*, and the like, and to make the reader acquainted with the everyday life of the poet at home or abroad; yet the passion for Lesbia was so absorbing when it was lighted, and possessed its victim so thoroughly, that we must needs treat it first in our sketch of his writings. A poet's love has mostly been inseparable from his after-fame; and in a higher degree than the Cynthia of Propertius, the Corinna of Ovid, or the Delia, probably, of Tibullus, does the Lesbia of Catullus fasten her spell around him, to the exclusion of other and fresh loves, of which he was apparently cautious and forbearing both before and after the crisis of his master-passion. His erotic verses, save those to Lesbia, are but few. Ipsithilla, Aufilena, and Ametina are mere passing and casual amours, soon forgotten; he is oftener found supping with a

friend and his *chère amie* than flirting on his own account; and there is nothing in Catullus that betrays the almost certainty that his mistress has justification in his infidelity for any number of her own *lâches* and transgressions, such as is always peeping out in the elegies of Propertius. On the contrary, it is fair to believe that in his case "the heart that once truly loved ne'er could forget," however unfortunate and direful its choice and the issue of it. He was true to the ideal and stanch to the championship of Lesbia's resplendent beauty, long after he had proved that it was not for him; and however disastrous to his peace of mind, health, and even life, the results of her coldness and fickleness, the spell clung to his heart, even after his mind was cured; and so Lesbia asserts foremost mention when we call up the surroundings of Catullus.

Who, then, was this potent enchantress? The elder sister, it is pretty well agreed, of that notorious P. Clodius who was slain by Milo, and a member of the great Claudian house at Rome. Like brother, like sister! The former had added a grave sacrilege to unheard-of profligacy, and outraged even the lax standard of Roman society in his day by the versatility of his shamelessness. To the character of an unbridled libertine he added that of an unscrupulous political incendiary, with whom poison and assassination were wonted modes of removing a rival from his path. The Clodia whom we identify by almost common consent with the Lesbia of Catullus was the second of his three sisters, and unequally yoked with Metellus Celer, who was consul in 60 B.C., and on frequent occa-

sions a correspondent of Cicero. But, like her sisters, she was notorious for her infidelities; and, like her brother, was not nice as to methods of getting rid of such as slighted her advances or tired of her fickleness. Even Cicero was credited with having stirred her passion unwittingly. A gay friend of Catullus, Cælius Rufus, had incurred her persecutions and false accusations of an attempt to poison her, by freeing himself from his *liaison* with her; and Cicero had defended him in a speech which furnishes the details of her abandoned life of intrigue and profligacy. With her husband she was at constant war; and his death by poison in 59 B.C. was freely laid at his wife's door. So, at least, we gather from Cicero's defence of Cælius, delivered in the following year, which saddles her with epithets betokening the depths to which she had descended in her career of vice and licence. After her husband's death, and her release from a yoke which she had never seriously respected, she appears to have given herself over to the licentious pleasures of Baiæ, kept open house with the young *roués* of the capital at her mansion on the Palatine, and consorted with them without shame or delicacy by the Tiber's bank, or on the Appian Road. In such company Catullus, as an intimate of Cælius, Gellius, and others whose names were at one time or another in her visitors' book, most probably first met her; and the woman had precisely the fascinations to entangle one so full of the tender and voluptuous, and withal so cultivated and accomplished as Catullus must have been. It has been epi-

grammatically said of the women of that epoch at Rome that "the harp and books of Simonides and Anacreon had replaced the spindle and distaff; and that with a dearth of Lucretias," or chaste matrons, "there was no lack, unfortunately, of Sempronias"* —*i.e.*, unchaste blue-stockings. But had Clodia's or Lesbia's culture and cleverness been the head and front of her offending, the poet might less have rued his introduction to a sorceress who, "insatiable of love, and almost incapable of loving," had ambition, vanity, and woman's pride sufficient to covet a name in connection with the foremost lyric poet of the day. On his part there seems to have been no resistance to the toils; and no wonder if, with the ends of her vanity to achieve, she bent her literary talents, as well as her coquetry and natural graces of mien and person, to his captivation. Cicero has recorded that she was talked of, like Juno, as βοῶπις, in compliment to her grand and flashing eyes; and there is no lack of evidence that her beauty, grace, figure, and wit were rare. It might be asked on what certitude this description of Clodia is transferred so confidently to Lesbia. In the first place, let it be admitted that, after the fashion of the Alexandrian poets, the custom prevailed with such Roman writers as Varro, Atacinus, Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, to celebrate their mistresses under the feigned names of Leucadia, Lycoris, Delia, Cynthia, Corinna; and it

* Sempronia, wife of D. Junius Brutus, was a woman of personal attractions and literary acquirements, but of profligate *character.*

will not seem unlikely that Catullus should choose for the *nom de plume* of his enslaver a name recalling Sappho the Lesbian, especially as it was probably by a sympathetic translation into Latin sapphics of her famous ode to Phaon that he first announced his suit and evinced his passion. After this is granted, it will remain to decide from internal evidence whether there are grounds of identification between the Lesbia of Catullus's poetry and the famous or infamous sister of Publius Clodius. They need only be summarised to establish a verdict in the affirmative, and confirm the statement of Apuleius that she whom Ovid tells us Catullus loved under the feigned name of Lesbia, was the Clodia whose character Cicero painted in such undisguised force of colours. First, both lay under the stigma of guilty relations with a brother. Secondly, both appear to have at one time indulged an amour with Cælius Rufus, and both were unmistakably married women. Thirdly, the characters of both coincide in point of wit, learning, and cultivation, their persons in exceptional beauty, and their tempers in caprice and occasional violence. Fourthly, the rank of Clodia was distinctly high and patrician; and though an evil name attached to her on Cicero's showing, there is no reason to suppose that she utterly disregarded appearances. Lesbia's rank, indeed, is not indicated in plain terms by her poet, but it comes out in a probable interpretation of some expressions in an elegiac poem to Allius, that she was certainly no vulgar *intriguante*, but met her lover at the house of that noble, and so far paid the outward respect to

decency, which is wont to be retained later than most other characteristics by the well-born.

The remains of Catullus would be deprived of three parts of their interest, had the Lesbian odes and ditties been unfortunately lost. Not only, however, is this not the case, inasmuch as, of many extant, she is the distinct burden: but many poems, not professedly addressed to her, are really referable to her inspiration. Accordingly, it is a part of the *rôle* of every critic of Catullus to arrange, according to his skill in divination or conjecture, the sequence of the poems of the Lesbian series; and that which it has been thought most convenient to follow in these pages is the plausible and clear arrangement of Theodore Martin, the most congenial and appreciative of the poet's English translators. It is a happy and shrewd instinct which places first in the series that model translation from Sappho's Greek fragment, which seems at once a naming-day ode and a declaration of passion, fenced and shielded under the guise of being an imitative song. The poet, in the fervour of his new-kindled devotion, in the flutter of hope and yearning, and not yet in the happiness of even short-lived assurance, pours forth a wonderful representation of one of the most passionate of Greek love-songs; and therein (if we strike out an alien stanza, which reads quite out of place, and must have been inserted, in dark days, by some blundering botcher or wrong-headed moralist) transfers from the isles of Greece burning words which have suffered nothing in

the process, and which perhaps served the poet for a confession of his flame :—

"Peer for the gods he seems to me,
And mightier far, if that may be,
Who, sitting face to face with thee,
Can there serenely gaze ;
Can hear thee sweetly speak the while,
Can see thee, Lesbia, sweetly smile ;
Joys that from me my senses wile
And leave me in a maze.

For ever, when thy face I view,
My voice is to its task untrue,
My tongue is paralysed, and through
Each limb a subtle flame
Runs swiftly ; murmurs dim arise
Within my ears, across my eyes
A sudden darkness spreads, and sighs
And tremors shake my frame." *

Nothing that we could add by way of comment could enhance the truth to nature of the sensations, which the poet renders more vivid as he endorses them, and which Tennyson and Shelley have, consciously or unconsciously, enumerated in kindred sequence in "Eleonore" and the "Lines to Constantia singing." There is something in their reality and earnest truth from the heart, for which we look in vain for imitation in the Elizabethan lyrists. Probably to the same season of hope and wooing must be referred the two

* C. li., Rossbach and Lachmann ; Th. Martin, p. 3.

pretty ditties on Lesbia's sparrow, in life and in death, which the most casual of readers connects with Catullus, and which have given the key-note to any number of imitations, parodies, and kindred conceits, though, it may be confidently averred, at a marked abatement of ease and grace. In the first, he pictures with vivid touches the coy and witching charmer, inflaming her jealous and impatient lover, and haply disguising her own passion, by playful toying with her pet birdie, to which she surrenders her finger-tip in mock provocation. He has plainly no sympathy with misplaced favours, as he regards the privileges vouchsafed the favourite, whilst he hungers in the very reach of enjoyment. And his moral from what he witnesses is the simple suggestion of a less trifling and more worthy object—himself—though there is a little obscurity in the connection with Atalanta and the apples. We give it, in this instance, from a stray version by the author of 'Lorna Doone'—

"Oh that I could play with thee
Like herself, and we could find
For sad harassings of mind
Something gay to set them free!

This would charm me, as they tell
That the nimble demoiselle,
Charmed by golden fruit, betrayed
All her vows to die a maid."—R. D. B.

Perchance the poet did not take into account that the fruit, once grasped, was scarce worth the effort to secure it; that all was not gold that glittered; that

Lesbia was incapable of deeper feeling than wantoning with a bird-pet. But the birdie's elegy is a yet more memorable poem,—one, too, that elicits the poet's element of pathos. Written to ingratiate himself with Lesbia, its burden is a loyal commemoration of his *quondam* rival; but a line or two, even if suggested by an Alexandrian idyllist, on the greed of Orcus and the brief life of all that is lovely and lovable, touch a chord which was never far from the vein of Catullus, though he is soon recalled to the sensible detriment which his lady's eyes are likely to suffer from her tears:—

"Loves and Graces mourn with me—
Mourn, fair youths, where'er ye be!
Dead my Lesbia's sparrow is—
Sparrow that was all her bliss;
Than her very eyes more dear;
For he made her dainty cheer,
Knew her well, as any maid
Knows her mother; never strayed
From her bosom, but would go
Hopping round her, to and fro;
And to her, and her alone,
Chirruped with such pretty tone.
Now he treads that gloomy track
Whence none ever may come back.
Out upon you, and your power,
Which all fairest things devour,
Orcus' gloomy shades, that e'er
Ye took my bird that was so fair!
Ah, the pity of it! Thou
Poor bird, thy doing 'tis, that now
My loved one's eyes are swollen and red
With weeping for her darling dead."

It only needs to compare this delicate and musical piece, and the subtle infusion of its (in the original) tender diminutives, with Ovid's "On the Death of a Parrot," in which the parrot is very secondary to its mistress, and we shall discern the elements of popularity which made it a household word up to the time of Juvenal, and still preserve it as a trial-ground for neatness and finish in translators.

But soon we find a song that gives a note of progress in Lesbia's good graces. A sense of enjoyment and *abandon* animates the strain in which Catullus pleads for licence to love his fill, on the ground that to-morrow death may terminate the brief reign of fruition. In sharp contrast with the heyday of present joy he sets the drear prospect which had made itself felt in the poem last quoted; but now it is as an incentive to "living while we may:"—

> "Suns go down, but 'tis to rise
> Brighter in the morning skies;
> But when sets our little light,
> We must sleep in endless night."

The moral, or conclusion, is not that which commends itself to faith or hope; but the pagan mind of the erotic poets delighted, as we may see in Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius, also in the contrast of now and then—the gay brightness of the passing hour with the dark shadow looming in the background—and drew from it no profounder suggestion than — love and kisses! In the *rationale* or arithmetic of these, Catullus shows himself an adept. In the piece just quoted

he piles up an addition sum that takes away the breath, and eventually gives a reason for

> "Kiss after kiss without cessation,
> Until we lose all calculation;
> *So envy shall not mar our blisses*
> *By numbering up our tale of kisses.*"

The ancients had a motive for letting their kisses pass counting, which does not appear in the love-ditties of our Herricks and Drummonds, though both betray the influence of Catullus—the deprecation, to wit, of magic, mischance, ill-luck, or an evil-eye, which their superstition considered unascertained numbers to secure. Exemption from such, then, was a stimulus to the lover's appetite for kisses, as is pleaded again by the poet "To Lesbia Kind" in C. vii., where he exhausts the round of similes for numbers numberless—the sea-sands, the stars of night, and so forth—and doubts whether the very largest definite number

> "Which a curious fool might count,
> Or with tongue malignant blast,"

could satisfy his thirst and fever. One could wish that to the Lesbian series might be linked a short poem in kindred vein (C. xlviii.) which may well sum up the poet's *dicta* upon the subject, inscribed "To a Beauty"—

> "Oh, if I thine eyes might kiss,
> And my kisses were not crimes,
> I would snatch that honeyed bliss
> Full three hundred thousand times!

Nor should these a surfeit bring,
Not though that sweet crop should yield
Kisses far outnumbering
Corn-ears in the harvest-field."

But whilst as yet Catullus enjoys a dream of successful love, and the fancied happiness of possession, with no misgivings arising from awakened jealousy or fears of fickleness, has he left any hint whereby we may reach the secret of Lesbia's witchery? There is one which does pre-eminently supply this—his comparison of her with a contemporary beauty generally admired, by name Quinctia. The latter, he admits, has several feminine charms; but Lesbia's attraction is the concentration in herself of all the perfections of the most peerless women. Hers is a gathering of "every creature's best" into one ineffable grace, "so perfect and so peerless" is she! * But let Catullus speak through his eloquent interpreter—

"Most beautiful in many eyes
Is Quinctia, and in mine
Her shape is tall, and straight withal,
And her complexion fine.

These single charms of form and face
I grant that she can show;
But all the concentrated grace
Of 'beautiful,' oh no!

For nowhere in her can you find
That subtle voiceless art—

* Ferdinand to Miranda—"The Tempest," act iii. sc. 1.

That something which delights the mind,
And satisfies the heart.

But Lesbia's beautiful, I swear;
And for herself she stole
The charms most rare of every fair,
To frame a perfect whole."

But anon comes a change over the poet's complacent satisfaction. This perfect creature is only outwardly and bodily perfect; or, if her mental endowments enhance the attractions of her form and beauty, he soon finds that the heart is wanting. It was her pride in the homage of a brilliant and popular poet that had bidden her win him to her feet: the effort to retain him there was too great for her fickle temperament, if indeed she did not trust her fascinations to keep him attached to her train—at fast or loose, as it suited her purpose. It would hardly seem that he could have counted upon much more, if we are to connect with Lesbia, as there is every reason to do, the poem to Manius Acilius Glabrio, in which he professes toleration of rivals, and goes so far as to say that—

"Therefore so that I, and I alone,
Possess her on the days she culls for me,
And signalises with a whiter stone,
I care not how inconstant she may be."
—(C. lxviii. *ad fin.*)

Perhaps for a while it sufficed him to act as his own detective, and warn off such fops as Gellius, Alfenus,

Egnatius, and Ravidus with sarcasms, innuendos, and threats of biting iambics, if they forestalled his privileged visits. He may have trusted also somewhat to the gratitude he might quicken in Lesbia's bosom by such compliments by contrast as the skit he wrote on the mistress of Mamurra of Formiæ, a creature of Julius Cæsar, who had raised him in Gaul from a low station, and put him in the way of acquiring wealth for the simple purpose of squandering it. Its tenor is a mock compliment to a provincial belle of features nowise so perfect and well matched as they might be. And the suggestion that this is she about whom the province raves, leads up to what Catullus deems the *ne plus ultra* of absurdity :—

> "But then they say your shape, your grace,
> My Lesbia's, mine, surpasses!
> Oh woe, to live with such a race
> Of buzzards, owls, and asses!"—(C. xliii.)

Lesbia, however, most probably felt her hold on her poet to be sufficiently tenable for her taste or purpose, and, wanton-like, shrank not from trespassing on a love which, however sensual, might have been counted as stanch for the period. And so she doubtless trespassed upon it, and outraged him by some more than common heartlessness; for such must have been the provocation for his touching verses to "Lesbia False," which open a new phase in the history of this attachment, and discover a depth of pathos and tenderness in the contemplation of eternal separation, which in the brief sunshine of her favour he had had

no scope for developing. The feeling which is aroused is not one of pique or retaliation, or any like selfish resort of vengeance: he steels himself, theoretically, against the weakness of further dalliance with one so faithless; but his concern is for the most part about her fall from a pedestal whereon his love had set her:—

> "A woman loved, as loved shall be
> No woman e'er by thee again!"

Some lingering glances are indeed thrown in the direction of past delights, and of "love for love;" but the burden of his song is the change it will be to her when she realises that

> "Her love for every one
> Has made her to be loved by none."

There is no consolation to be drawn from a bitter smile at this. Catullus sees the course which self-respect dictates to him, but cannot keep from the thought as to Lesbia—

> "How drear thy life will be!
> Who'll woo thee now? who praise thy charms?
> Who now be all in all to thee,
> And live but in thy loving arms?
>
> Ay, who will give thee kiss for kiss?
> Whose lip wilt thou in rapture bite?
> But thou, Catullus, think of this,
> And spurn her in thine own despite."—(C. viii.)

Fine resolves "to let the wanton go," which she, on

her part, appears to have faintly opposed by offhand professions and general assurances, which Catullus, for the matter of that, was quite sharp enough to see through. "My mistress," he writes in C. lxx.—

"My mistress says, there's not a man
Of all the many that she knows,
She'd rather wed than me, not one,
Though Jove himself were to propose.

She says so;—but what woman says
To him who fancies he has caught her,
'Tis only fit it should be writ
In air or in the running water."

The last line of the first stanza is a commonplace for a Roman fair one's assurance of stanchness which, if analysed, will prove to be a very safe averment. Jove the resistless was never likely to put her constancy to the test, though Ovid and his brother poets fabled otherwise. In their view, as Theodore Martin remarks, "the purity was too sublime for belief which could withstand the advances of the sire of gods and men." It is something, then, to find our lovelorn poet retaining enough strength of mind to meet the lady's oath by a counter-commonplace; though it must be owned that his good resolutions and steeled heart do not count for much, when the next poem in Martin's arrangement exhibits him not only declining, as generosity might prompt him, to abuse the frail one himself, but also disposed to turn a sceptical ear to certain scandals which had been brought to his notice:—

"Could I so madly love, and yet
Profane her name I hold so dear?
Pshaw! you with any libels let
Your pot-house gossips cram your ear!"

Perhaps to this state of suspense and partial estrangement may be referable the verses about Lesbia's vow to burn the 'Annals' of Volusius, a wretched poet whom she had professed to favour, if Catullus would only return to her arms, and cease brandishing his iambic thunderbolts. The crisis at last has come when the idol has been shattered; but the votary cannot yet shake off the blind servitude which his better judgment repudiates. As yet he can comfort himself with those fallacious tokens of mutual love which appear in his ninety-second piece, and which may be given, for a change, from Swift's translation:—

"Lesbia for ever on me rails;
To talk of me she never fails.
Now, hang me, but for all her art
I find that I have gained her heart.
My proof is this, I plainly see
The case is just the same with me;
I curse her every hour sincerely,
Yet hang me but I love her dearly!"

Unfortunately, the love has vitality and elements of steadfastness only on the one side. Repeated sins against it open wide the eyes of Catullus, till he is forced to own to himself that the sole link that is left between them is rather a passion of wild desire than the purer and tenderer flame, which burned for her

whilst he believed her true. Here is his confession of the new phase of his love, the love that's merely a madness :—

"So loved has woman never been
As thou hast been by me,
Nor lover yet was ever seen
So true as I to thee.

But cruel, cruel Lesbia, thou
Hast by thy falsehood wrought
Such havoc in my soul, and now
So madly 'tis distraught,

'Twould prize thee not, though thou shouldst grow
All pure and chaste as ice ;
Nor could it cease to love thee, though
Besmirched with every vice."—(C. lxxv.)

He can now condone the past for the mere bribe of a passing favour. He is one moment lifted to ecstasies by the "agreeable surprise" of Lesbia's unexpected kindness, and pours out his soul in transports breathing passionate prayers for a reunion which his secret heart seems to whisper has no elements of continuance. When he sings in C. cix.—

"So may each year that hurries o'er us find,
While others change with life's still changing hue,
The ties that bind us now more firmly twined,
Our hearts as fond, our love as warm and true"—

the petition is rendered of none effect by the misgiving implied in his fond hope that Lesbia's professions *may* be sincere. Full soon must the truth have un-

deceived him, for it must have been after, but not long after, this revival of his transient bliss, that, on the eve of foreign travel with a view to placing the sea between himself and his fickle mistress, he commissioned Furius and Aurelius, friends and comrades for whom he elsewhere shows his regard, to carry her a message of plaintive adieu, which reads like a threnody of buried love :—

> "Enjoy thy paramours, false girl !
> Sweep gaily on in passion's whirl !
> By scores caressed, but loving none
> Of all the fools by thee undone ;
> Nor give that love a thought, which I
> So nursed for thee in days gone by,
> Now by thy guile slain in an hour,
> *Even as some little wilding flower,*
> *That on the meadow's border blushed,*
> *Is by the passing ploughshare crushed.*"—(C. xii.)

The crushed hope, which is likened to the frail flower on the meadow's edge next the furrow (or, as we call it, the "adland"), is one of the most graceful images in the whole of Catullus, and speaks volumes for his freshness of fancy, whilst asserting the depth of his passion. After this, there seems to have remained for the poet little save pathetic retrospects, which he can scarce have hoped would wake remorse. Perhaps it was not the way to quicken this, to plead *in formâ pauperis* his own deserts and good deeds of happier days, nor yet the fell disease which is wasting him away, in the form of a broken heart. In the 76th poem, such, however, was one of his last references to

the subject, a burden of passionate regrets, which are mingled with distinct admissions that he knows Lesbia to be wholly past reclaiming. The whole tone of it bespeaks emancipation and return to a free mind, purchased, however, at the cost of an abiding heartache. But was it not time? Would the poet have deserved a niche in the temple of fame, could he have still dallied with one of whom he could write to Cælius Rufus, an old admirer, who had found her out much earlier, in terms we can only approach by free translation, as follows?—

"Our Lesbia, Cælius—Lesbia once so bright—
Lesbia I loved past self, and home, and light,
And all my friends,—has sunk i' th' mire so low,
That in its lanes and alleys Rome doth know
No name so cheap, no fame so held at naught
By coarse-grained striplings of the basest sort."
—(C. lviii.) D.

CHAPTER III.

CATULLUS BEFORE AND AFTER THE MISSION TO BITHYNIA.

THE fever of Catullus for Lesbia asserts for itself a first place in the biography of Catullus; but the most distinct chronological landmark is his mission in the suite of Memmius to Bithynia. Yet, before the date of that expedition, and at a very early point of his career,—the period of which, in C. lxviii. 15-19, he says, according to Mr Ellis's "Longs and Shorts"—

"Once, what time white robes of manhood first did array me,
Whiles in jollity life sported a spring holiday,
Youth ran riot enow; right well she knows me, the Goddess—
She, whose honey delights blend with a bitter annoy,"—

he probably wrote those poems of a more or less scurrilous and unproducible character which betray some sort of connection with his earlier and more ephemeral loves. Of these, it would seem as if some were written at Verona and in his native district, as they lack, more than other poems distinctly later in date, the urbanity which Catullus could assume upon occasion. Some of them are simply reproductions of local gossip and

scandal, the piquancy of which belonged to the hour. One (C. lxxxii.) is a poetic appeal to a friend, if he values his friendship, to abstain from rivalling him in his love—a style of appeal to which the poet has recourse again and again at an after-date; and the two most considerable are a dialogue between Catullus and a door, which has no good to tell of its mistress; and a more presentable though still ambiguous skit on a stupid husband, who was clearly a fellow-townsman of the poet's, and had made himself a butt by wedding a young wife. The point of this poem consists in the colony addressed (which we take to be Verona) having had a rickety old bridge, of which the citizens were ashamed. The poet takes occasion to make poetical capital at the same time out of the popular longing for a better structure, and the ridicule attaching to an ill-assorted union. He bargains for a new bridge being inaugurated, by the precipitation of the "old log" from the creaky arches of a structure like himself. It appears that this bridge had been the scene of all the country town's *fêtes* and galas; and its inadequacy for such work is amusingly compared with the ill-matching of December and May, which is illustrated hard by it. A stave of the version by Professor Badham of Sydney will furnish so much of a taste of this poem as the reader will care to read :—

"I should like from your bridge just to cant off the log,
For the chance that his rapid descent to the bog
Might his lethargy jog;
And the sloth of his mind,
Being left there behind,

In the quagmire should stay,
As the mule leaves his shoe in the glutinous clay."
(C. xvii.)

But it is to a period between this and the journey to Bithynia that we refer at least some of his livelier trifles, written to friends, or against foes and rivals; such as the banter of Flavius, whose bachelor lodgings he suspects could tell a tale to explain the rich-distilled perfumes filling the room; the invitation to Tibullus to come and dine, and bring with him not only his *chère amie*, but also the dinner and wine—in fact, all but the unguents. The excuse for this quaint mode of entertaining is one which gives what colour there is to the theory that the poet's tour abroad was to recruit his fortune. He writes—

"But bring all these you must, I vow,
If you're to find yourself in clover,
For your Catullus' purse just now
With spiders' webs is running over."

This apportionment of a picnic entertainment was just the reverse, it seems, of one to which Horace (Odes, B. iv. 12) invited a certain Virgil, who was to bring the unguent, whilst his host found the wine; but Catullus tells us in this case it was such superlative unguent—

"Unguent, that the Queen
Of beauty gave my lady-love, I ween;
So, when in its sweet perfume you repose,
You'll wish that your whole body were a nose."
—(C. xiii.)

To realise this, we should bear in mind the ancient esteem for chaplets, rose-leaves, and perfumes of all kinds at the banquet, and the expense to which Roman hosts would go to gratify this taste. To judge by Martial (whom Theodore Martin quotes on this passage), it sometimes went to the length of the banquet striking the guests as much more a concern of the nose than of the mouth or palate. Perhaps it is no bad thing that we have gone back to a more natural arrangement. Another glimpse at a dinner or supper at which the poet assisted may have belonged to this period, and at any rate is amusing and characteristic. It is in a squib upon one Marrucinus Asinius, apparently a brother of Horace's and Virgil's friend, the poet-statesman Asinius Pollio, imputing to him a petty larceny of which we have heard in modern boarding-houses, and which many know, to their sorrow, is at least matched by the modern disregard of *meum* and *tuum* in the matter of umbrellas and wraps. It was in jest, of course—but sorry, ill-understood jest, according to Catullus—that this worthy had a knack of purloining his brother guests' napkins whilst at meat; and what made matters worse was, that the *convives* of old brought these napkins with them, and if they missed them during the meal, were reduced to an inconvenience which we who don't eat with our fingers cannot realise. Catullus begins by telling this low joker that his fun is not such as gentlemen understand—fun which he is sure his refined and witty brother, Pollio, would pay a talent rather than have tacked to the name of any of his kin. But he adds

that the reason why he insists on the napkin's restitution, on pain of a thorough lampooning, is this:—

"'Tis not for its value I prize it—don't sneer!
But as a memento of friends who are dear.
'Tis one of a set that Fabullus from Spain
And Verannius sent me, a gift from the twain;
So the napkins, of course, are as dear to Catullus
As the givers, Verannius himself and Fabullus."
—(C. xii.)

The names of these two boon companions of our poet, by the way, are a slight support to the theory of "cobwebs in the pocket or purse" before alluded to. Their easy lives and pleasant manners and dinners-out at Rome had no doubt rendered it a necessity on their parts to get upon some prætor's staff; and so they had been to Spain with Cnæus Calpurnius Piso, a commissariat officer with prætorian powers, whom collateral evidence shows to have been a selfish and needy voluptuary, whose *ménage* was mean and shabby, and who fleeced his suite as well as his province. It is to the first of this pair that Catullus addresses a poem, which represents him favourably in the *rôle* of friend, and from which one gathers an idea of a literary lounger's interest in travellers' tales (C. ix.)–

"Dearest of all, Verannius! O my friend!
Hast thou come back from thy long pilgrimage,
With brothers twain in soul thy days to spend,
And by thy hearth-fire cheer thy mother's age?

And art thou truly come? Oh, welcome news!
And I shall see thee safe, and hear once more
Thy tales of Spain, its tribes, its feats, its views,
Flow as of old from thy exhaustless store.

And I shall gaze into thine eyes again !
And I again shall fold thee to my breast !
Oh, you who deem yourselves most blest of men,
Which of you all like unto me is blest ?"

It is hard to conceive a truer or heartier welcome home; but, as a sample of our poet's lighter and more satiric vein, should be read alongside of it his lines to the two adventurers on their joint return, replete with kind inquiries for their pocket-linings. Catullus has a suspicion how things have gone :—

"Your looks are lean, your luggage light !
What cheer ? what cheer ? Has all gone right ?"

He goes on to surmise that they have disbursed considerably more than they netted; and branches off into some not unnatural radicalism about the folly of "courting noble friends," and the desirability of putting no trust in patrons. By this time, he had himself made trial of Memmius—for he does not scruple to classify that self-seeking prætor with the broken reed on whom his friends had depended; and, in the close of the poem we quote, he speaks plainly :—

"O Memmius, by your scurvy spite,
You placed me in an evil plight !
And you, my friends, for aught I see,
Have suffered very much like me ;
For knave as Memmius was, I fear
That he in Piso had his peer."—(C. xxviii.)

There are several unattached pieces of Catullus, which we might assign to a date prior to his Bithynian

expedition—to wit, the lines to his Cup-bearer, memorable as his sole express drinking-song (C. xxvii.), and the Mortgage (C. xxvi.); the one distinct in its rather youthful advocacy of *neat* potations—the other a possible reiteration of temporary impecuniosity, though, as has been said above, this theory must not be pressed too far. Anyhow, he was minded to join the proprætor Memmius's train, and swell as his poet for the nonce the "little Rome" which he gathered round him in the province. He may easily have been light of purse after so long a bondage to Lesbia; he may well have hoped to dissipate his chagrins by the variety of foreign travel: so to Bithynia went Catullus, with his friends, Helvius Cinna, Furius, and Aurelius, in the spring of 57 B.C. It has been told already how he despatched his parting words to Lesbia by the last-named pair. To Bithynia he sped; and his journey, sojourn, and return, supply a landmark, around which a tolerable amount of his extant poems may be clustered. It is not indeed directly that we discover what a failure it was in a commercial point of view. By putting two and two together, we collect that he spent a year in the proprætor's suite, and then visited, on the home route, Pontus, the Propontis, Thrace, Rhodes, the Cyclades, and the cities of Greece, arriving in due course, by way of the Adriatic, and by the canal which connected the Adige with the Mincio, at his own estate and villa of Sirmio. In one of his best-known and sweetest poems he commemorates the pinnace wherein he performed the voyage; and in another, as sweet, his feelings at reaching "home

sweet home," rendered dearer by so many months of absence. The piece which lets us into the history of the stay-abroad is a lively picture of Roman gay life, and of a matter-of-fact gay lady, the *chère amie* of the poet's friend Varus, in whose company Catullus found it difficult to maintain a wise reserve as to the extent of his shifts and ill-luck in the Bithynian venture. She, like every one else, was agog to know how it had succeeded:—

> "Is gold so rife there as they say;
> And how much did you pocket, eh?"

The poet at first was pretty explicit:—

> "Neither I,
> Nor yet the prætor, nor his suite,
> Had in that province luck to meet
> With anything that, do our best,
> Could add one feather to our nest.
> Our chances, too, were much decreased,
> The prætor being such a beast,
> And caring not one doit, not he,
> For any of his company."

Thinking this admission enough, Catullus would fain have turned the subject before the lady discovered the utter barrenness of his return. But this was not her idea. Had he not brought home "a litter and bearers"? Every one knew they grew in Bithynia. The poor poet tried to make believe that he had; and her next move was to ask the loan of them to go to the shrine of Serapis. What was he to do, when he had not the ghost of even one brawny knave to carry his truckle-

bed? He backs out of it with the lame excuse that the bearers are scarcely his to lend, being Caius Cinna's purchase, though what was Cinna's was his friend's also; but, ends the poet, driven into a corner—

> "But, madam, suffer me to state,
> You're plaguily importunate,
> To press one so extremely hard,
> He cannot speak but by the card."—(C. xi.)

Not much evidence, it may be said, of the fruits, or want of fruit, of a year in the provinces. At any rate, there is proof that a second spring found the poet on the wing, rejoicing to be homeward bound. He is going to see all he can of famous cities by the way; and it does not seem as if he had persuaded any of his comrades to bear him company, though it has been surmised without much proof that his brother was of the number. Perhaps they had fared even worse, and could ill afford to pay their share of the expenses of the home route. The "Farewell to Bithynia" is so fresh and tender, and its last lines breathe a misgiving so soon to be realised, if the theory to which we alluded about his brother be true, that they deserve quotation:—

> "A balmy warmth comes wafted o'er the seas;
> The savage howl of wintry tempests drear
> In the sweet whispers of the western breeze
> Has died away;—the spring, the spring is here!
>
> Now quit, Catullus, quit the Phrygian plain,
> Where days of sweltering sunshine soon shall crown
> Nicæa's fields with wealth of golden grain,
> And fly to Asia's cities of renown.

Already through each nerve a flutter runs
Of eager hope, that longs to be away;
Already, 'neath the light of other suns,
My feet, new-winged for travel, yearn to stray.

And you, ye band of comrades tried and true,
Who side by side went forth from home, farewell!
How far apart the paths shall carry you
Back to your native shore—ah, who can tell?"
—(C. xlvi.)

What a suggestive thought for the breaking-up of a year's daily familiar intercourse, with the jests, confabulations, lounges, tiffs, confidences, to which it has given rise! Once interrupted, will this conclave ever reassemble in its integrity? Of those that meet, how many will retain their like-mindedness? how few will not have "suffered a sea change" that has made them other than they were in heart, tone, and affections? To two, we know, of this company, Furius and Aurelius, our poet wrote a rather savage retort in later years for a strong expression upon the freedom and licence of his life and verses; and whilst he attempted the lame defence of an unchaste Muse on the score of a decent life (as to which he had much better, we suspect, have said little or nothing), indignantly objected to the criticism of his moral character by a couple of *roués* sunk as low in profligate living as he hints they are. To tell the truth, the poet's mode of life at all times must have been such as to render it the only feasible course for him to fall back upon a lame and impotent *tu quoque*. But he may have been in no mood for their old jokes and innuendos, however

familiar as edge-tools to his earlier nature, when this same change of scene had brought him face to face with personal ill-health and with a beloved brother's death. We cannot exactly time this last event, which took place in the Troad; or it might seem as though, in the last passage quoted, our poet had been endowed with a spirit of prophecy. Certain it is that the premature loss of him—

> "Whom now, far, far away, not laid to rest
> Amid familiar tombs with kindred dust,
> Fell Troy detains, Troy impious and unblest,
> 'Neath its unhallowed plain ignobly thrust"
> —(C. lxviii. 97-100)

wrought a distinct change of tone in the effusions of Catullus, thenceforth more directed towards the attraction of friendly sympathy than the youthful and hot-headed concoction of scurrilous and offensive lampoons. With a vaguely-ascertained chronology, it is not easy to prove this by examples; but it is consistent with a tender and affectionate nature that such a change should have supervened, though it cannot be maintained that there were no recurrences to the earlier and more pungent vein. One or two glimpses of Catullus as a master, and in his simpler and more domestic relations, will fitly end the present chapter, and give a meet conclusion to the Bithynian voyage. What pleasanter pride of ownership ever found its vent in song than our poet's dedication of his pinnace after it had done its work, and conveyed him home into the Lago di Garda?—

"Yon pinnace, friends, now hauled ashore,
Boasts that for speed none ever more
Excelled, or 'gainst her could avail
In race of oars, or eke with sail.
This, she avers, nor Adria's bay
Nor Cyclad isles will dare gainsay—
Fierce Thrace, or Rhodes of ample fame,
Or Pontus with ill-omened name;
Where whilom it, a pinnace now,
Was a maned tree on mountain-brow:
Yea, from its mane on tall Cytorus
Soft music sighed in breeze sonorous.
Whose box-clad heights, Amastris too,
Avouch this origin as true;
And witness what my pinnace vows,
It first saw light on yonder brows—
First dipt its oars in neighbouring sea,
And then through wild waves carried me,
Its master, in its stanch, smart craft,
Breeze foul or fair, or wind right aft.
No calls to gods of sea or shore
She lifted; and, the voyage o'er,
From farthest tracts of brine, to rest,
Came to our smooth lake's placid breast.
'Tis over now. Her mission done,
Here she enjoys a rest well won,
And dedicates her timbers here
To Castor and to Castor's peer."—(D.)

The fascination of the piece, of which this is a transcript, has been so widely felt, that it has yielded itself to dozens of clever and graceful parodies and imitations at various times. One of the most recent is in a little volume of 'Lays from Latin Lyres,' recently published at Oxford, where the pinnace re-

appears as an Oxford racing-boat, dear to its own college for victories innumerable over such rivals as

> "Brasenose of boating fame,
> Or Exeter with crimson oar,
> Or Balliol men from Scotia's shore."

But the intrinsic charm of the original consists in the fond ownership which breathes in it; and the same is the case with the poet's address to Sirmio, his marine estate, on his return from his voyage in it, which we give in the version of Professor Robinson Ellis:—

"O thou of islands jewel, and of half-islands,
Fair Sirmio, whatever o'er the lake's clear rim
Or waste of ocean Neptune holds, a twofold power:
What joy have I to see thee! and to gaze, what glee!

Scarce yet believing Thynia past, the fair champaign
Bithynian, yet in safety thee to greet once more.
From cares no more to part us—where is any joy like this?

When drops the soul her fardel, as the travel-tired,
World-weary wand'rer touches home, returns, sinks down
In joy to slumber on the bed desired so long—
This meed, this only, counts for e'en an age of toil.

O take a welcome, lovely Sirmio, thy lord's,
And greet him happy; greet him all the Lydian lake:
Laugh out whatever laughter at the hearth rings clear."

Mr Ellis's expression for the last line of the Latin sets

at rest a claim of various competitors, and realises the gist of the verse, though the metre is very hard to accustom one's self to. Without adopting Landor's emendations, we may quote his illustration of the concluding verses of this piece: "Catullus here calls on Sirmio to rejoice in his return, and invites the waves of the lake to laugh. Whoever has seen this beautiful expanse of water, under its bright sun and gentle breezes, will understand the poet's expression—he will have seen the winds dance and laugh." The critic, however, based an emendation of "Ludiæ" for "Lydiæ," "dancing" for "Lydian," on his bit of criticism. In another poem (C. xliv.) of a humorous character, we see the same kindlier side of the poet's nature, in his affection for his Sabine and Tiburtine farm. The *locale* of this was one appreciated by Horace, and a retreat which Catullus must have thought himself lucky in having at command. He playfully hints that his friends will best please him if they dub it *Tiburtine*, though there was no doubt that its precise site, the banks of the Anio, made it an open question to which district it should be tacked; and he pays it a tribute of gratitude for enabling him to shake off a pestilential catarrh, which appears to have had its beginning in that seat of all evils, the stomach. A desire of epicurean experiences and of a dinner with a certain Sestius, who united the reputation of a brilliant host with that of a dull orator, had led the evil genius of Catullus to a banquet, where he was bored to death by the recital of his entertainer's oration against one Caius Antius; and this proved a penance so grievous that the poet

humorously declares it gave him an ague. He fell a-coughing incontinently, and there was nothing for it, he adds—

> "Until I fled,
> And cured within thy cosy breast
> Myself with nettle-juice and rest."

In the same playful vein, Catullus records his thanks to the nurse who has brought him round again—his farm personified—for letting him off so lightly for a temporary fickleness; and makes a facetious promise that if ever again he lets the love of good living entice him into such a purgatory, he'll invoke these shivers and this hacking cough—not on himself, oh dear no!—but on the ill-advised host who only invites his friends when he wants to air his lungs and speeches.

Here, it will be said, crops out, amidst strong home instincts, the old and strong leaven of satire and lampooning. But if we turn to the crowning grief of the life of Catullus, it will be seen how severe and absorbing is his tender grief. Here is the outpouring of his heart at the grave in the Troad:—

> "In pious duty, over lands and seas,
> Come I, dear brother, to thine exsequies;
> Bent on such gifts as love in death doth pay,
> Fraught with last words to cheer thee on thy way;
> In vain. For fate hath torn thee from my side,
> Brother, unmeet so early to have died.
> Yet, oh! such offerings as ancestral use
> Assigns the tomb, may haply find excuse:
> Yea, take these gifts fraternal tears bedew,
> And take, oh take, my loving, last adieu!"
>
> —(C. ci.) D.

But with affectionate natures like that of Catullus, the memory is not silenced by the barrier which divides the yearning spirit from its kind. The last adieu is a figure of speech which a thousand reminiscences falsify. The forlorn brother tries to solace himself with tender allusions to his bereavement whenever he is sending a missive to some congenial spirit, or inditing epistles of sympathy to a patron in kindred sorrow. What can be sweeter than his lines to Hortalus which accompanied the translation of his Alexandrian model, Callimachus's poem on "Berenice's Hair," to which we shall have to refer again; or his allusion to the same loss in the elegiacs to Manlius, when he undertook the difficult task of consoling with an elegy one whom he gifted erewhile with the most glowing of epithalamia? There is one allusion also to the same topic in the verses to M. Acilius Glabrio, breathing the same acute sense of desolation, and deploring the destiny that ordains their ashes to lie beneath the soils of different continents. It may suffice to cite Theodore Martin's version of the allusion, in the lines to Hortalus, to the brother so soundly sleeping by the Rhætean shore in Trojan earth:—

"Oh! is thy voice for ever hushed and still?
O brother, dearer far than life, shall I
Behold thee never? But in sooth I will
For ever love thee, as in days gone by;
And ever through my songs shall ring a cry
Sad with thy death—sad as in thickest shade
Of intertangled boughs the melody,
Which by the woful Daulian bird is made,
Sobbing for Itys dead her wail through all the glade."

—(C. lxv.)

In the like allusion of the poem to Manlius we are told further that the brother's death has had the effect of turning mirth to gloom, taking light and sun from the dwelling, and robbing home of the charm of mutual studies and fraternal unity. Even in modern times, a recent poet of the second rank is perhaps best remembered by his touching lyrics on "My Brother's Grave," and may have got the first breath of inspiration from the Roman poet, who, as he tells us in the 67th poem, retired for self-converse and the society of his despair to the rural retreats of Verona. Perhaps in such isolation it is well to be broken in upon; perhaps it is the sense that comes upon one, after a course of enforced loneliness, that one's books, treasures, haunts (as with Catullus) are in town, that makes the mourner see the folly of unavailing sorrow, and strive to shake it off, though, in his case, with too little health for achieving his task successfully.

CHAPTER IV.

CATULLUS AMONG MEN OF LITERATURE.

THOUGH we have just seen Catullus bidding fair to sink into despondency, there is no reason to suppose that this state of spirits at once, or ever entirely, shut out gayer moods upon occasion, much less that it put an end to social intercourse with those literary compeers of whom in his brief life the poet had no lack. When at Rome he contrived to amuse himself by no means tristely, if we may accept the witness of one or two lively pieces that seem to belong to the period after the Bithynian campaign, and to the closing years of his career. One stray piece—"To Camerius" (C. liv.) —gives a little hint of the company he kept, and the manner in which his days were frittered away, even when a cloud had overshadowed his life. It is a playful rallying of an associate of lighter vein upon the nature of his engagements and rendezvous, and affords a glimpse of Roman topography not so common in Catullus as could have been wished. Wishing to track his friend to his haunts, the poet says he sought him in the *Campus Minor*, which would seem to have been a distinct division of the

Campus Martius, in the bend of the Tiber to the north of the Circus Flaminius, and to have represented a familiar portion of the great Roman park and race-course. In the Circus, also, and in the book-shops, in the hallowed Temple of Capitoline Jupiter at no great distance from the same public resort, as well as in the Promenade and Portico of Pompey the Great, lying to the south of the Campus Martius, and attached to the Theatre of Pompey built by him in his second consulship B.C. 55 (and so now in the height of fashion and novelty), Catullus has sought his friend, but can nowhere get an inkling of him. But for the mention of the book-stalls, we might have passed by the whereabouts of Camerius, as the nature of the poet's inquiries implies that the truant was pleasantly engaged in a congenial flirtation, which he had the good sense to keep to himself. The sequel, however, of the verses of Catullus goes to prove that he was himself alive to the same amusements as his friend, and would have been well pleased to have been of his company. The grievance was that the search proved fruitless. His Alexandrian myth-lore furnishes him half-a dozen standards of fleetness to which he professes to have attained—Talus, Ladas, Perseus, Pegasus, and the steeds of Rhesus—and yet he has not overtaken Camerius, but had to chew the cud of his disappointment, besides being tired and footsore.

But it would be a mistake to argue systematic frivolity from casual glimpses of days wasted, upon a lively poet's own showing. On the other side of the

scale may be counted the names of learned and witty contemporaries—known like himself to fame—with whom Catullus was in familiar intercourse. Foremost perhaps we should set Cornelius Nepos and Cicero: the former, because to him Catullus dedicates his collected volume; the latter, for the very complimentary terms in which he rates the chief of orators, albeit the sorriest of poets. Lest there should be any doubt in the face of internal evidence as to the identity of Cornelius with him of the surname familiar to schoolboys, it may be noted that this is set at rest by a later poet, Ausonius; but the verses of dedication evince a lively interest in the historian and biographer, whose 'Epitome of Universal History' has not survived the wreck of ages, whilst the lives which we read, with the exception of that of Atticus, are simply an epitome of the work of Nepos. The gracefully-turned compliment of the poet, however, will show the store he sets by his friend's literary labours and erudition—and it is best represented by Theodore Martin:—

"My little volume is complete,
Fresh pumice-polished, and as neat
As book need wish to be;
And now, what patron shall I choose
For these gay sallies of my Muse?
Cornelius, whom but thee?

For though they are but trifles, thou
Some value didst to them allow,
And that from thee is fame,

Who daredst in thy three volumes' space,
Alone of all Italians, trace
Our history and name.

Great Jove! what lore, what labour there!
Then take this little book, whate'er
Of good or bad it store;
And grant, oh guardian Muse, that it
May keep the flavour of its wit
A century or more!"

The reference to the polish of the pumice-stone in the first verse may be simply metaphorical, and designed to express the general neatness of the work as poetry; but this sense must not be pressed too far, when we remember the enhancement of an author's affection for his own productions, which consists in their neat turning out and getting up. The ancient parchments underwent no small amount of pumice-polishing on the inside for the purpose of taking the ink, and on the outside, with the addition of colour, for a finish. Our poet might indulge in a reasonable complacency when he sent a presentation copy to Cornelius Nepos, which externally and internally laid equal claim to neatness. It was not so always, as we find him telling his friend Varus, in reference to the poetaster Suffenus, who had a knack of rattling off any number of verses, and then, without laying them by for correction and revision, launching them upon the public in the smartest and gayest of covers. Of this scribbler's mania he writes—

"Ten thousand lines and more, I wot,
He keeps fair-copied—scribbled not

On palimpsest—but ripe for view;
Red strings, spruce covers, paper new
And superfine, with parchment lined,
And by the pumice-stone refined."
—(C. xxii.) D.

Whatever may have been Catullus's weakness, he at least would have turned out verses that did not depend for acceptance on their cover. To his intimacy with Marcus Tullius Cicero, despite the hindrances which it might have been supposed to risk on the supposition that Lesbia was Clodia, Catullus has left distinct witness in the brief but pointed epigram :—

"Most eloquent of all the Roman race
That is, hath been, or shall be afterward,
To thee Catullus tenders highest grace,
Sorriest of poets in his own regard;
Yea, sorriest of poets, aye, and worst,
As Tully is of all our pleaders first."
—(C. xlix.) D.

But among the intimates of our poet was another pleader, who, if second to Cicero in the forum, was more than his match in the field which Catullus adorned—Licinius Calvus Macer. That he held high rank as an orator is beyond a doubt: he has some claims to be the annalist of that name much quoted and referred to by Livy: he has the credit with Ovid and contemporary poets of a neck-and-neck place in poetry with Catullus, though nothing remains to test the soundness of the critical comparison. Both wrote epigrams; of both Ovid sings in his dirge over Tibullus that if there is any after-world, learned Catullus,

with his youthful temples wreathed in ivy, will meet him there, in the company of Calvus. All that we read of the latter is in his favour, with the exception, perhaps, of the scurrilous lampoons on Cæsar and his satellites, in which, as elsewhere, he emulated his brother poet. Like him, his career was brief, for he died of over-training and discipline in his thirty-fifth year, his famous speech against Vatinius having been delivered in his twenty-seventh, and having been his first forensic effort. It was *apropos* of that speech that Catullus made the following *jeu d'esprit*, with an allusion to his friend's union of vehement action with a person and stature small almost to dwarfishness :—

"When in that wondrous speech of his,
My Calvus had denounced
Vatinius, and his infamies
Most mercilessly trounced—

A voice the buzz of plaudits clove—
My sides I nearly split
With laughter, as it cried, 'By Jove!
An eloquent tom-tit!'"—(C. liii.)

As is not uncommon with men of like stature, vehemence of gesticulation made up for insignificance of height and physique; and that Vatinius had reason to feel this, is gleaned from Seneca's tradition, that when he found how telling was its impression on his tribunal, he exclaimed, "Am I, then, judges, to be condemned simply because yon pleader is eloquent?" We have, however, more concern with him as a poet. The first piece of Catullus in which we are introduced to him

might meetly be headed "Retaliation;" for in it our poet bitterly upbraids Calvus for inflicting upon him a morning's work that, but for their ancient love, might provoke more lasting hatred than his speech drew from Vatinius. He had sent him, it seems, a "horrible and deadly volume" of sorry poetry, a "rascally rabble of malignants"—the latest novelty from the school of Sulla the grammarian; for no other object than to kill him at the convenient season of the Saturnalia with a grim playfulness, which the poet vows shall not go unrequited:—

> "Come but to-morrow's dawn, I'll surely hie
> To stall and book-shop, and the trash I buy,
> With sums on Cæsius and Suffenus spent,
> Mischievous wag, shall work thy punishment."
>
> —D.

At other times the intercourse between the friends was not so disappointing. Seemingly at Calvus's house the two friends met one evening to enjoy the feast of reason and the flow of soul, and the effects of such unmixt enjoyment overset the poet's fine-wrought brain-tissues:—

> "How pleasantly, Licinius, went
> The hours which yesterday we spent,
> Engaged as men like us befits
> In keen encounter of our wits!
> My tablets still the records bear
> Of all the good things jotted there:
> The wit, the repartee that flew
> From you to me, from me to you:
> The gay bright verse that seemed to shine
> More sparkling than the sparkling wine."

The end of it was, however, that Catullus could not "sleep for thinking on't" when he reached home, and was all agog to be up at dawn, and to challenge a renewal of the pleasant word-fence; but misused nature resented the liberties our poet thought to take with it. His limbs were so tired with a sleepless night, that he was fain, at dawn of day, to stick to his couch; and from thence to fire off a lively poem of remembrance to his comrade of the night before, the burden of which is to warn him against offering any impediment to a speedy and equally pleasant reunion, lest haply Nemesis should exact the like penalties from him who has hitherto come off scot-free. One other notice of Calvus is demanded by a sense of our poet's higher and tenderer vein of poesy. It seems that at the age of twenty-eight Calvus lost his beloved mistress Quinctilia—a theme for tearful elegies, of the beauty of which neither Propertius nor Ovid were insensible, whilst it secured a tender echo in Catullus, whose heart was prepared for reciprocity by a community of suffering:—

"If, Calvus, feeling lingers in the tomb,
And shades are touched by sense of mortal tears,
Mourning in fresh regrets love's vanished bloom,
Weeping the dear delights of vanished years;

Then might her early fate with lighter grief
Thy lost Quinctilia's gentle spirit fill,
To cherish, where she bides, the assured belief
That she is nearest, dearest to thee still."

—(C. xcvi.) D.

Besides these distinguished names, others almost as well known might be enumerated among the more worthy associates of Catullus; for instance, Asinius Pollio, the friend of Virgil and Horace, the scholar, poet, and public man, to whose refinement and taste he testifies in Poem xii. ("To Marrucinus Asinius"); Varus, whose other name was more probably Quintilius than Alphenus, and who will then be the accomplished scholar and soldier from Catullus's own neighbourhood, Cremona, to whose memory Horace pays such a touching tribute;* and Helvidius Cinna, the poet who at Cæsar's funeral was killed by the rabble in mistake for his namesake Cornelius Cinna, and of whom we get a notice in Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," and in Plutarch. His famous work was a probably epic poem named "Smyrna," of which only a couple of verses are extant; but if we may accept Catullus's friendly judgment, the example of Cinna in taking nine years to elaborate his epic, was one that other poets might with advantage follow; and a favourable tradition of him has clung to the grammarian. He is mentioned above in the poem about a visit to Varus's mistress, *apropos* of the sedan from Bithynia; and in Poem xcv. there is some light afforded to the elaborate character of his great work. It is given in Mr Robinson Ellis's elegiacs, more for their exactness than their elegance:—

* Ode I. xxiv., Ad Virgilium.

"Nine times winter had end, nine times flushed summer in harvest,
Ere to the world gave forth Cinna the labour of years—
'Smyrna;' but in one month Hortensius hundred on hundred
Verses, an unripe birth feeble, of hurry begot."

Our poet goes on, in verses somewhat defective and corrupt, to say that Cinna's masterpiece will be studied by ages yet unborn, whereas the annals of Volusius — the scribbler of whom the 36th poem written for Lesbia records Catullus's opinion—may expect one inevitable destiny—to be used as wrappers for mackerel and other cheap fish. It is but fair to add that Virgil passingly alludes to the poetry of Cinna as meritorious.*

There remain one or two other contemporaries of kindred vein of whom we know only the names, and what Catullus has written on them. Such are Cæcilius and Cornificius, to whom are addressed his 35th and 38th poems. The former, as is gathered from the first of these, dwelt, or had a villa, near the town and lake of Como—

"Whose fair pellucid waters break
In many a dimpling smile"—

and this Catullus exhorted him to quit upon a visit to himself at Verona, not, however, without shrewd misgivings that there was a charming cause for his

* Virgil, Ecl. ix. 35.

rustication and retirement. Cæcilius is engaged on a poem "To the Mighty Mother, Cybele," and has excited his mistress's curiosity and interest by recital of the completed half of it. She will not let him go till she has heard the rest. Catullus's opinion of her good taste is expressed in the concluding stanza :—

"Thy passion I can well excuse,
Fair maid, in whom the Sapphic Muse
Speaks with a richer tongue ;
For no unworthy strains are his,
And nobly by Cæcilius is
The Mighty Mother sung."

Of Cornificius as little is known as of Cæcilius. He would seem to have been one of the fair-weather friends who hang aloof when sickness and failing health yearn for the kindly attention and affectionate *souvenir*. The little poem addressed to him bears evidence of the poet's decline. He is succumbing to the loss of his brother supervening on the laceration of his heart by the unfeeling Lesbia. This may well have been the last of his many strains—certainly one of the most touching and plaintive ; and of the translations, we know none that does it justice but Theodore Martin's :—

"Ah, Cornificius ! ill at ease
Is thy Catullus' breast ;
Each day, each hour that passes, sees
Him more and more depressed.

And yet no word of comfort, no
  Kind thought, however slight,
Comes from thy hand. Ah! is it so
  That you my love requite?

One little lay to lull my fears,
  To give my spirit ease—
Ay, though 'twere sadder than the tears
  Of sad Simonides."

CHAPTER V.

HYMEN, O HYMENÆE!

CATULLUS has been presented up to this point rather as the writer of passionate love-verses to Lesbia, or *vers de société* to his friends, literary or light, as the case might be. There are yet two other and distinct aspects of his Muse. That which he borrowed from the Alexandrian school of poetry will demand the full consideration of another chapter; but in the present it will suffice to give some account of his famous epithalamia, the models of like composition for all time, and the *loci classici* of the ceremonial of Roman marriages, as well as exquisite pictures of the realisation of mutual affection. It has been seen how fully, notwithstanding his own blighted hopes, Catullus was able to conceive the life-bond between his friend Calvus and his helpmeet Quinctilia. A longer and more lively picture presents the ecstasy of Acme and Septimius in lines and words that seem to burn. The two doting lovers plight vows, and compare omens, and interchange embraces and kisses that inspire with passion the poet's hendecasyllables. The conclusion of the piece is all we can quote, and is

given from a translation by the author of 'Lorna Doone,' but it may serve to show that Catullus was capable of picturing and conceiving the amount of devotion which his nuptial songs connect with happy and like-minded unions:—

"Starting from such omen's cheer,
Hand in hand on love's career,
Heart to heart is true and dear.
Dotingly Septimius fond
Prizes Acme far beyond
All the realms of east and west—
Acme to Septimius true,
Keeps for him his only due,
Pet delights and loving jest.
Who hath known a happier pair,
Or a honeymoon so fair?" R. D. B.

One image from the rest of the poem cannot pass unnoticed—that of Acme bending back her head in Septimius's embrace, to kiss with rosy mouth what Mr Blackmore translates "eyes with passion's wine opprest;" but the whole piece deserves to the full the unstinted praise it has met with from critics and copyists.

The Epithalamium of Julia and Manlius, however, is a poem of more considerable proportions; and at the same time that it teems with poetic beauties, handles its subject with such skill and ritual knowledge as to supply a correct programme of the marriage ceremonial among the Romans. Strictly speaking, it is not so much a nuptial ode or hymn in the sense in which the playmates of Helen serenade her in

Theocritus, as a series of pictures of the bridal procession and rites, from end to end. The subjects of this poem were a scion of the ancient patrician house of the Torquati, Lucius Manlius Torquatus, a great friend and patron of our poet, and Vinia, or Julia Aurunculeia, one of whose two names seems to have been adoptive, and as to whom the poet's silence seems to imply that her bridegroom's rank was enough to dignify both. It was not so long afterwards that Manlius sought our poet's assistance or solace in the shape of an elegy (see Poem lxviii.) on her untimely death; but in the present instance his services are taxed to do honour to her wedding: and it may be interesting to accompany him through the dioramic description which his stanzas illustrate. The poem opens with an invocation to Hymen, child of Urania, dwelling in his mother's Helicon, bidding him wreathe his brows with sweet marjoram or amaracus, fling round him a flame-coloured scarf, and bind saffron sandals to his feet, in token of going forth upon his proper function and errand. Other accompaniments of his progress are to be song, and dance, and pine-torch,—each of them appropriate in the evening fetching-home of the bride from her father's house; and his interest is bespoken in one who is fair, favoured, and fascinating as Ida's queen, when she condescended to the judgment of Paris:—

"As the fragrant myrtle, found
Flourishing on Asian ground,
Thick with blossoms overspread,
By the Hamadryads fed,

For their sport, with honey-dew—
All so sweet is she to view."

It is this paragon, proceeds the ode, for whose sweet sake the god is besought to leave awhile his native grottos and pools, and lend his aid in binding soul to soul to her husband—yea, closer than clasping ivy twines meshy tendrils round its naked elm. To welcome her too, as well as to invite Hymenæus to his wonted office with the readier alacrity, are bidden the blameless maidens of the bride's train, with a series of inducements adapted to bespeak their sympathy—his interest in happy nuptials, his blessing so essential to the transfer of the maiden from one home and name to another, his influence on the prospects of an honoured progeny; and strong language is used, in vv. 71-75, of such nations as ignore the rites and ordinances of marriage.

And now the bride is bidden to come forth. The day is waning; the torch-flakes flicker bright in the gloaming; there is no time for tears of maidenly reluctance; the hour is at hand:—

"Dry up thy tears! For well I trow,
No woman lovelier than thou,
Aurunculeia, shall behold
The day all panoplied in gold,
And rosy light uplift his head
Above the shimmering ocean's bed!

As in some rich man's garden-plot,
With flowers of every hue inwrought,
Stands peerless forth, with drooping brow,
The hyacinth, so standest thou!

Come, bride, come forth! No more delay!
The day is hurrying fast away!"

Then follow encouragements to the bride to take the decisive step over the threshold, in the shape of substantial guarantees of her bridegroom's loyalty; and of course the elm and the ivy are pressed, for not the first time, into such service. More novel, save that the text of Catullus is here so corrupt that commentators have been left to patch it as they best may for coherence, is the stanza to the bridal couch. All that Catullus has been allowed by the manuscripts to tell us is that its feet were of ivory, which is very appropriate; but if the reader's mind is enlisted in the question of upholstery, it may be interested to know that collateral information enables one critic to surmise that the hangings were of silver-purple, and the timbers of the bedstead from Indian forests. But anon come the boys with the torches. Here is the veil or scarf of flame-colour, or deep brilliant yellow, capacious enough, as we learn, to shroud the bride from head to foot, worn over the head during the ceremony, and retained so till she was unveiled by her husband. Coincidently the link-bearers are chanting the hymenæal song, and at intervals, especially near the bridegroom's door, the rude Fescennine banter is repeated; whilst the bridegroom, according to custom, flings nuts to the lads in attendance, much as at a Greek marriage it was customary to fling showers of sweetmeats. The so-called Fescennine jests were doubtless as broad as the occasion would suggest to a lively and joke-loving nation;

and another part of the ceremonial at this point, as it would seem from Catullus, though some have argued that it belonged rather to the marriage-feast, was the popular song "Talassius" or "Talassio," said to have had its origin in an incident of the "Rape of the Sabine Women." Catullus represents the choruses at this point as instilling into the bride by the way all manner of good advice as to wifely duty and obedience, and auguring for her, if she takes their advice, a sure rule in the home which she goes to share. If she has tact, it will own her sway—

> "Till hoary age shall steal on thee,
> With loitering step and trembling knee,
> And palsied head, that, ever bent,
> To all, in all things, nods assent."

In other words, a hint is given her that, though the bridegroom be the *head* of the house, she will be herself to blame if she be not the *neck*.

As the poem proceeds, another interesting ceremonial, which is attested by collateral information, is set graphically before the reader. Traditionally connected with the same legend of the carrying off of the Sabine women, but most probably arising out of a cautious avoidance of evil omens through a chance stumble on the threshold, was a custom that on reaching the bridegroom's door, the posts of which were wreathed in flowers and anointed with oil for her reception, the bride should be carried over the step by the *pronubi*—attendants or friends of the groom, who must be "husbands of one wife." This is expressed as

follows in Theodore Martin's happy transcript of the passage of Catullus :—

"Thy golden-sandalled feet do thou
Lift lightly o'er the threshold now!
Fair omen this! And pass between
The lintel-post of polished sheen!
Hail, Hymen! Hymenæus, hail!
Hail, Hymen, Hymenæus!

See where, within, thy lord is set
On Tyrian-tinctured coverlet—
His eyes upon the threshold bent,
And all his soul on thee intent!
Hail, Hymen! Hymenæus, hail!
Hail, Hymen, Hymenæus!"

By-and-by, one of the three prætexta-clad boys, who had escorted the bride from her father's home to her husband's, is bidden to let go the round arm he has been supporting; the blameless matrons (*pronubæ*), of like qualification as their male counterparts, conduct the bride to the nuptial-couch in the atrium, and now there is no let or hindrance to the bridegroom's coming. Catullus has so wrought his bridal ode, that it culminates in stanzas of singular beauty and spirit. The bride, in her nuptial-chamber, is represented with a countenance like white parthenice (which one critic * suggests may be the camomile blossom) or yellow poppy for beauty. And the bridegroom, of course, is worthy of her; and both worthy

* It may interest some to know that this was an MS. suggestion of poor Mortimer Collins, a dear lover of Catullus.

of his noble race, as well as meet to hand it on. The natural wishes follow:—

> "'Tis not meet so old a stem
> Should be left ungraced by them,
> To transmit its fame unshorn
> Down through ages yet unborn."

The next lines of the original are so prettily turned by Mr Cranstoun, that we forbear for the nonce to tax the charming version of Martin:—

> "May a young Torquatus soon
> From his mother's bosom slip
> Forth his tender hands, and smile
> Sweetly on his sire the while
> With tiny half-oped lip.
>
> May each one a Manlius
> In his infant features see,
> And may every stranger trace,
> Clearly graven on his face,
> His mother's chastity."

Of parallels and imitations of this happy thought and aspiration, there is abundant choice. Theodore Martin's taste selects a graceful and expanded fancy of Herrick from his "Hesperides;" while Dunlop, in his 'History of Roman Literature,' quotes the following almost literal reproduction out of an epithalamium on the marriage of Lord Spencer by Sir William Jones, who pronounced Catullus's picture worthy the pencil of Domenichino:—

> "And soon to be completely blest,
> Soon may a young Torquatus rise,

Who, hanging on his mother's breast,
To his known sire shall turn his eyes,
Outstretch his infant arms awhile,
Half-ope his little lips and smile." *

The poem concludes with a prayer that mother and child may realise the fame and virtues of Penelope and Telemachus, and well deserves the credit it has ever enjoyed as a model in its kind.

Of the second of Catullus's Nuptial Songs — an hexameter poem in amœbæan or responsive strophes and antistrophes, supposed to be sung by the choirs of youths and maidens who attended the nuptials, and whom, in the former hymn, the poet had been exhorting to their duties, whereas here they come in turn to their proper function—no really trustworthy history is to be given, though one or two commentators propound that it was a sort of brief for the choruses, written to order on the same occasion for which the poet had written, on his own account, the former nuptial hymn. But the totally different style and structure forbid the probability of this, although both are remarkable poems of their kind. This one, certainly, has a ringing freshness about it, and seems to cleave the shades of nightfall with a *réveillé* singularly rememberable. The youths of the bridegroom's company have left him at the rise of the evening star, and gone forth for the hymenæal chant from the tables at which they have been feasting. They recognise the bride's approach as a signal to strike up the hymenæal. Hereupon the maidens who have accompanied

* Dunlop's Roman Literature, i. 497.

the bride, espying the male chorus, enter on a rivalry in argument and song as to the merits of Hesperus, whom they note as he shows his evening fires over Œta—a sight which seems to have a connection with some myth as to the love of Hesper for a youth named Hymenæus localised at Œta, as the story of Diana and Endymion was at Latmos, to which Virgil alludes in his eighth eclogue. Both bevies gird themselves for a lively encounter of words, from their diverse points of view. First sing the virgins:—

"Hesper, hath heaven more ruthless star than thine,
That canst from mother's arms her child untwine?
From mother's arms a clinging daughter part,
To dower a headstrong bridegroom's eager heart?
Wrong like to this do captured cities know?
Ho! Hymen, Hymen! Hymenæus, ho!"—D.

The band of youths reply in an antistrophe which negatives the averment of the maidens:—

"Hesper, hath heaven more jocund star than thee,
Whose flame still crowns true lovers' unity;
The troth that parents first, then lovers plight,
Nor deem complete till thou illum'st the night?
What hour more blissful do the gods bestow?
Hail! Hymen, Hymen! Hymenæus, ho!"—D.

To judge of the next plea of the chorus of maidens by the fragmentary lines which remain of the original, it took the grave form of a charge of abduction against the incriminated evening star. If he were not a principal in the felonious act, at least he winked at it, when it was the express vocation of his rising to pre-

vent, by publicity, all such irregular proceedings. But now the youths wax bold in their retort, and wickedly insinuate that the fair combatants are not really so very wroth with Hesper for his slackness. After a couplet which seems to imply, though its sense is obscure and ambiguous, that the sort of thieves whom these maidens revile, and whose ill name is not confined to Roman literature (for in the Russian songs, as we learn from Mr Ralston's entertaining volumes, the bridegroom is familiarly regarded as the "enemy," "that evil-thief," and "the Tartar"), speedily find their offences condoned, and are received into favour, they add a pretty plain charge against the complainants that—

> "Chide as they list in song's pretended ire,
> Yet what they chide they in their souls desire."

This is such a home-thrust that the virgins change their tactics, and adduce an argument *ad misericordiam*, which is one of the most admired passages of Catullus, on the score of a simile often imitated from it. The following version will be found tolerably literal:—

> "As grows hid floweret in some garden closed,
> Crushed by no ploughshare, to no beast exposed,
> By zephyrs fondled, nursed up by the rain,
> With kindly sun to strengthen and sustain:
> To win its sweetness lads and lasses vie:
> But let that floweret wither by-and-by,
> Nipped by too light a hand, it dies alone;
> Its lover lads and lasses all are flown!

E'en as that flower is lovely maiden's pride,
In her pure virgin home content to bide;
A husband wins her,—and her bloom is sere,
No more to lads a charm, or lasses dear!"—D.

The last line is undoubtedly borrowed from a fragment of the Greek erotic poet, Mimmermus; and the whole passage, as Theodore Martin shows, has had its influence upon an admired canto of Spenser's 'Faery Queen' (B. ii. c. xii.)

Will the boys melt and give in, or will they show cause why they should not accept this sad showing of the mischief, for which Hymen and Hesper have the credit? Let us hear their antistrophe:—

"As a lone vine on barren, naked field
Lifts ne'er a shoot, nor mellow grape can yield,
But bends top-heavy with its slender frame,
Till root and branch in level are the same:
Such vine, such field, in their forlorn estate
No peasants till, nor oxen cultivate.
Yet if the same vine with tall elm-tree wed,
Peasants will tend, and oxen till its bed.
So with the maid no lovers' arts engage,
She sinks unprized, unnoticed, into age;
But once let hour and man be duly found,
Her father's pride, her husband's love redound."*
—D.

* Compare the sentiment of Waller's "Go, Lovely Rose," particularly in the third stanza:—

"Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired."

The epithalamium ends with an arithmetical calculation of the same special pleaders, which the maidens apparently find unanswerable, and which is of this nature—namely, that they are not their own property, except as regards a third share. As the other two shares belong to their parents respectively, and these have coalesced in transferring their votes to a son-in-law, it is obviously as futile as it is unmannerly to demur to the nuptial rites. And so the poem ends with the refrain of "Hymen, O Hymenæe!" It has with much plausibility been conjectured by Professor Sellar to be an adaptation of Sappho or some other Greek poet to an occasion within Catullus's own experience. Certainly it does not exhibit like originality with the poem preceding it. It might be satisfactory, were it possible, to give, by way of sequel to the epithalamium of Julia and Manlius, trustworthy data of the young wife's speedy removal; but this is based upon sheer conjecture, and so much as we know has been already stated. If we might transfer to the elegiacs addressed to Manlius before noticed a portion of the story of Laodamia, which has sometimes been printed with them, but is now arranged with the verses to Manius Acilius Glabrio, we should be glad to conceive of Julia's wedded life as matching that of Laodamia, and offering a model for its portrayal.

"Nor e'er was dove more loyal to her mate,
That bird which, more than all, with clinging beak,
Kiss after kiss will pluck insatiate—
Though prone thy sex its joys in change to seek,

Than thou, Laodamia ! Tame and cold
Was all their passion, all their love to thine :
When thou to thy enamoured breast didst fold
Thy blooming lord in ecstasy divine.

As fond, as fair, as thou, so came the maid,
Who is my life, and to my bosom clung ;
While Cupid round her fluttering, arrayed
In saffron vest, a radiance o'er her flung."

—(C. lxviii.) M.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROMAN-ALEXANDRINE AND LONGER POEMS OF CATULLUS.

THAT portion of the poetry of Catullus which has been considered hitherto is doubtless the most genuine and original; but, with the exception of the two epithalamia, the poems now to be examined, as moulded on the Alexandrine form and subjects, are perhaps the more curious in a literary point of view. Contrasting with the rest of his poetry in their lack of "naturalism essentially Roman and republican," they savour undisguisedly of that Roman-Alexandrinism in poetry which first sprang up in earnest among the contemporaries of Cicero and Cæsar, and grew with all the more rapidity owing to the frequent visits of the Romans to the Greek provinces, and the increasing influx of the Greek *literati* into Rome. Of the Alexandrine literature at its fountain-head it must be remembered that it was the substitute and successor—on the ruin of the Hellenic nation, and the decline of its nationality, language, literature, and art—of the former national and popular literature of Greece. But it was confined to a limited range. "It was," says Pro-

fessor Mommsen, "only in a comparatively narrow circle, not of men of culture—for such, strictly speaking, did not exist—but of men of erudition, that the Greek literature was cherished even when dead; that the rich inheritance which it had left was inventoried with melancholy pleasure or arid refinement of research; and that the living sense of sympathy or the dead erudition was elevated into a semblance of productiveness. This posthumous productiveness constitutes the so-called Alexandrinism." Originality found a substitute in learned research. Multifarious learning, the result of deep draughts at the wells of criticism, grammar, mythology, and antiquities, gave an often cumbrous and pedantic character to laboured and voluminous epics, elegies, and hymnology (a point and smartness in epigram being the one exception in favour of this school), whilst the full genial spirit of Greek thought, coeval with Greek freedom, was exchanged for courtly compliment, more consistent with elaboration than freshness. Among the best of the Alexandrian poets proper—indeed, the best of all, if we except the original and genial Idyllist, Theocritus—was the learned Callimachus; and it is upon Callimachus especially that Catullus has drawn for his Roman-Alexandrine poems, one of them being in fact a translation of that poet's elegy "On the Hair of Queen Berenice;" whilst another, his "Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis," has been supposed by more than one critic to be a translation of Callimachus also. This is, indeed, problematical; but there is no doubt that for his mythologic details, scholarship, and other features savouring of ultra erudi-

tion, he owes to Callimachus characteristics which his intrinsic poetic gifts enabled him to dress out acceptably for the critics of his day. The singular and powerful poem of "Atys" belongs to the same class, by reason of its mythological subject. A recent French critic of Catullus, in a learned chapter on Alexandrinism, defines it as the absence of sincerity in poetry, and the exclusive preoccupation of form. "He," writes M. Couat, "who, instead of looking around him, or, better, within himself, parades over all countries and languages his adventurous curiosity, and prefers *l'esprit* to *l'âme*—the new, the pretty, the fine, to the natural and simple—such an one, to whatever literature he belongs, is an Alexandrinist." Alexandrinism in excess is what in this writer's view is objectionable; and whilst we are disposed to think that few will demur to this moderate dogma, it is equally certain that none of the Roman cultivators of the Alexandrine school have handled it with more taste and less detriment to their natural gifts than Catullus. With him the elaborateness which, in its home, Alexandrinism exhibits as to metre and prosody, is exchanged for a natural and unforced power, quite consistent with simplicity. As is well observed by Professor Sellar, "His adaptation of the music of language to embody the feeling or passion by which he is possessed, is most vividly felt in the skylark ring of his great nuptial ode, in the wild hurrying agitation of the Atys, in the stately calm of the Epithalamium of Peleus and Thetis." Herein, as indeed in the tact and art evinced generally in these

larger poems, we seem to find ground for dissent from the opinion of several otherwise weighty critics of Catullus, that they were the earlier exercises of his poetic career—a subject upon which, as there is the scantiest inkling in either direction, it is admissible to take the negative view. As a work of art, no doubt the "Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis" are damaged by the introduction of the episode of Ariadne's desertion within the main poem—an offence obviously against strict epic unity. But it is not by any means sure that this is so much a sign of youthful work as of an independence consistent with poetic fancy, and certainly not amenable to the stigma of Alexandrinism, which must be *en règle*, if anything. It is with this largest, and in many respects finest, sample of Catullus's epic capacity, that we propose to deal at greatest length, reserving space for a glance or two at the "Atys" and the "Hair of Berenice." "The whole poem" (Peleus and Thetis), to quote Mr Sellar once more, "is pervaded with that calm light of strange loveliness which spreads over the unawakened world in the early sunrise of a summer day." If here and there a suspicion of over-wrought imagery and description carries back the mind to a remembrance of the poet's model, it must be allowed that, for the most part, this poem excels in variety, in pictorial effects, in force of fancy, and clever sustentation of the interest. It begins with the day on which, in the hoar distance of mythic ages, the Pelion-born Argo was first launched and manned, and the first sailor of all ever burst on the realm of Amphitrite—a statement which we must not

criticise too closely, as the poet elsewhere in the poem tells of a fleet of Theseus prior to the Argonautic expedition:—

"Soon as its prow the wind-vexed surface clave,
Soon as to oarsmen's harrow frothed the wave,
Forth from the eddying whiteness Nereids shone,
With faces set—strange sight to look upon.
Then, only then, might mortal vision rest
On naked sea-nymph, lifting rosy breast
High o'er the billows' foam. 'Twas then the flame
Of love for Thetis Peleus first o'ercame:
Then Thetis deigned a mortal spouse to wed!
Then Jove approved, and their high union sped."
—D.

The poet having thus introduced the betrothal, as it were, of the goddess and the hero, pauses, ere he plunges into his subject, to apostrophise heroes and heroines in general, and more especially the twain immediately concerned: Peleus, for whom the very susceptible father of the gods had waived his own *penchant* for Thetis; Peleus, the stay and champion of Thessaly; and Thetis, most beautiful of ocean's daughters, and grandchild of earth-girding Tethys and her lord Oceanus—a fitting proem to the action of the poem, which commences with no further delay. We see all Thessaly come forth to do honour and guest-service to the nuptials, gifts in their hands, and joy and gladness in their countenances. Scyros and Phthia's Tempe, Cranon, and Larissa's towers are all deserted on that day, for the Pharsalian home where high festival and a goodly solemnity is kept. A lively

description follows of the country and its occupations given over to complete rest and keeping holiday; and this is seemingly introduced by way of contrast to the stir and splendour and gorgeous preparations within the halls of Peleus. But the poet without delay presses on to one of his grand effects of description—the rich bridal couch, with frame of ivory and coverlet of sea-purples, on which was wrought the tale of Ariadne's desertion by Theseus. She has just awakened to her loss, and the picture is one of passionate fancy and force. To give a transcript of this is impossible; and though Mr Martin's handling of the whole passage is admirably finished, yet where the best comes far short of the original, it seems justifiable to introduce a distillation of its spirit, without attempting metrical likeness. The following version is by the Rev. A. C. Auchmuty * (see Catull. lxiv. vv. 52-75):—

"There, upon Dia's ever-echoing shore,
Sweet Ariadne stood, in fond dismay,
With wild eyes watching the swift fleet, that bore
Her loved one far away.
And still she gazed incredulous; and still,
Like one awaking from beguiling sleep,
Found herself standing on the beachy hill,
Left there alone to weep.
But the quick oars upon the waters flashed,
And Theseus fled, and not a thought behind

---

* Verses, Original and Translated, by A. C. Auchmuty. Exeter, 1869.

He left; but all his promises were dashed
Into the wandering wind.
Far off she strains her melancholy eyes;
And like a Mœnad sculptured there in stone
Stands as in act to shout, for she espies
Him she once called her own.
Dark waves of care swayed o'er her tender soul;
The fine-wove turban from her golden hair
Had fallen; the light robe no longer stole
Over her bosom bare.
Loose dropped the well-wrought girdle from her breast,
That wildly struggled to be free: they lay
About her feet, and many a briny crest
Kissed them in careless play.
But nought she recked of turban then, and nought
Of silken garments flowing gracefully.
O Theseus! far away in heart and thought
And soul, she hung on thee!
Ay me! that hour did cruel love prepare
A never-ending thread of wildering woe;
And twining round that heart rude briars of care,
Bade them take root and grow;
What time, from old Piræus' curvèd strand
A ship put forth towards the south, to bring
Chivalrous-hearted Theseus to the land
Of the unrighteous king."

A comparison of the above with the Latin text will show that, as in the italicised passages, the translator has been careful to preserve, as much as might be, the expressions, metaphors, and similes of the author. That author proceeds from this point to explain the causes of Theseus's visit to the home of Minos, and to unfold the legend of the monster, the labyrinth, the clue to it supplied by Ariadne, and the treachery of

Theseus, who, when he had vanquished the monster, and led the princess to give up all for him, forsook her as she lay asleep in Dia's sea-girt isle. The lament of Ariadne on discovering her desolation is a triumph of true poetic art in its accommodation of the measure to the matter in hand; the change from calm description to rapid movement and utterance, as, climbing mountain-top, or rushing forth to face the surges upplashing over the beach to meet her, she utters outbursts of agony and passion intended to form a consummate contrast to the ideal happiness of them on whose coverlet this pathetic story was broidered. Two stanzas from Martin's beautiful and ballad-like version must represent the touching character of this lament, in which, by the way, are several turns of thought and expression which Virgil seems to have had in mind for the 4th Book of the 'Æneis:'—

"Lost, lost! where shall I turn me? Oh, ye pleasant hills of home,
How shall I fly to thee across this gulf of angry foam?
How meet my father's gaze, a thing so doubly steeped in guilt,
The leman of a lover, who a brother's blood had spilt?

A lover! gods! a lover! And alone he cleaves the deep,
And leaves me here to perish on this savage ocean steep.
No hope, no succour, no escape! None, none to hear my prayer!
All dark, and drear, and desolate; and death, death everywhere!" —(C. lxiv. vv. 177-187.)

The lines in which she declares that, had Ægeus objected to her for a daughter-in-law, she would have

been his handmaid, to spread his couch and lave his feet, have more than one echo in English poetry; and the climax of the lament, in a deep and sweeping curse on her betrayer, is a passage of terribly realistic earnestness:—

"Yet ere these sad and streaming eyes on earth have looked their last,
Or ere this heart has ceased to beat, I to the gods will cast
One burning prayer for vengeance on the man who foully broke
The vows which, pledged in their dread names, in my fond ear he spoke.

Come, ye that wreak on man his guilt with retribution dire,
Ye maids, whose snake-wreathed brows bespeak your bosom's vengeful ire!
Come ye, and hearken to the curse which I, of sense forlorn,
Hurl from the ruins of a heart with mighty anguish torn!

Though there be fury in my words, and madness in my brain,
Let not my cry of woe and wrong assail your ears in vain!
Urge the false heart that left me here still on with headlong chase,
From ill to worse, till Theseus curse himself and all his race!"
—M.

It is not to be denied that it would have been more artistic had the poet here dismissed the legend of Theseus and his misdemeanours, or, if not this, had he at least omitted the lesson of divine retribution conveyed in his sire's death as he crossed the home-threshold, and contented himself with the spirited presentment of Bacchus and his attendant Satyrs and

Sileni in quest of Ariadne, on another compartment of the coverlet. So far, the reader of the poem has represented one of the crowd gazing at the triumphs of needlework and tapestry in the bridal chambers. Now, place must be made for the divine and heroic guests, and their wedding-presents: Chiron, with the choicest meadow, alpine, and aquatic flowers of his land of meadows, rocks, and rivers; Peneius, with beech, bay, plane, and cypress to plant for shade and verdure in front of the palace; Prometheus, still scarred with the jutting crags of his rocky prison; and all the gods and goddesses, save only Phœbus and his twin-sister, absent from some cause of grudge which we know not, but which the researches of Alexandrine mythologists no doubt supplied to the poet. Anon, when the divine guests are seated at the groaning tables, the weird and age-withered Parcæ, as they spin the threads of destiny, in shrill strong voices pour forth an alternating song with apt and mystic refrain, prophetic of the bliss that shall follow this union, and the glory to be achieved in its offspring. Here are two quatrains for a sample, relating to Achilles the offspring of the union:–

" His peerless valour and his glorious deeds
Shall mothers o'er their stricken sons confess,
As smit with feeble hand each bosom bleeds,
And dust distains each grey dishevelled tress.
Run, spindles, run, and trail the fateful threads.

For as the reaper mows the thickset ears,
In golden corn-lands 'neath a burning sun,

E'en so, behold, Pelides' falchion shears
The life of Troy, and swift its course is run.
Run, spindles, run, and trail the fateful threads."
—D.

At the close of this chant of the fatal sisters, Catullus draws a happy picture, such as Hesiod had drawn before him, of the blissful and innocent age when the gods walked on earth, and mixed with men as friend with friend, before the advent of the iron age, when sin and death broke up family ties, and so disgusted the minds of the just Immortals that thenceforth there was no longer any "open vision"—

"Hence from earth's daylight gods their forms refrain,
Nor longer men's abodes to visit deign."

It is by no means so easy to give any adequate idea of the "Atys," which is incomparably the most remarkable poem of Catullus in point of metrical effects, of flow and ebb of passion, and of intensely real and heart-studied pathos. The subject, however, is one which, despite the praises Gibbon and others have bestowed on Catullus's handling of it, is unmeet for presentment *in extenso* before English readers. The sensible and correctly-judging Dunlop did not err in his remark that a fable, unexampled except in the various poems on the fate of Abelard, was somewhat unpromising and peculiar as a subject for poetry. In a metre named, from the priests of Cybele, Galliambic, Catullus represents—it may be from his experience and research in Asia Minor—the contrasts of enthusiasm and repentant dejection of one who, for

the great goddess's sake, has become a victim of his own frenzy. A Greek youth, leaving home and parents for Phrygia, vows himself to the service and grove of Cybele, and, after terrible initiation, snatches up the musical instruments of the guild, and incites his fellow-votaries to the fanatical orgies. Wildly traversing woodlands and mountains, he falls asleep with exhaustion at the temple of his mistress, and awakes, after a night's repose, to a sense of his rash deed and marred life. The complaint which ensues is unique in originality and pathos. "No other writer"—thus remarks Professor Sellar—"has presented so real an image of the frantic exultation and fierce self-sacrificing spirit of an inhuman fanaticism; and again, of the horror and sense of desolation which a natural man, and more especially a Greek or Roman, would feel in the midst of the wild and strange scenes described in the poem, and when restored to the consciousness of his voluntary bondage, and of the forfeiture of his country and parents and the free social life of former days." The same writer acutely notes the contrast betwixt "the false excitement and noisy tumult of the evening and the terrible reality and blank despair of the morning," which, with "the pictorial environments," are the characteristic effects of this poem. In the original, no doubt these effects are enhanced by the singular impetuosity of the metre, which, it is well known, Mr Tennyson, amongst others, has attempted to reproduce in his experiments upon classical metres. Such attempts can achieve only a fitful and limited success. English Galliambics can

never, in the nature of things or measures, be popular. And even supposing the metre were more promising, it is undeniably against the dictates of good taste to make the revolting legend of Atys a familiar story to English readers of the ancient classics.

Curiosity, however, would dictate more acquaintance with "Berenice's Lock of Hair," a poem sent, as has been already stated, by Catullus to Hortalus, and purporting to be the poet's translation of a court poem of his favourite model, the Alexandrian poet Callimachus. The metre of both is elegiac; but of the original only two brief fragments remain—so brief, indeed, that they fail to test the faithfulness of the translator. The subject, it should seem, was the fate of a tress which Berenice, according to Egyptian tables of affinity the lawful wife and queen of Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt, although she was his sister, dedicated to Venus Zephyritis as an offering for the safety of her liege lord upon an expedition to which he was summoned against the Assyrians, and which sadly interfered with his honeymoon. On his return the vow was paid in due course: the lock, however, shortly disappeared from the temple; and thereupon Conon, the court astronomer (of whom Virgil speaks in his third eclogue as one of the two most famous mathematicians of his time), invented the flattering account that it had been changed into a constellation. So extravagant a compliment would naturally kindle the rivalry of the courtly and erudite Alexandrian poet; and the result was soon forthcoming in an elegiac poem, supposed to be addressed to her mis-

tress by the new constellation itself, in explanation of her abduction. To judge by the fragments which are extant, Catullus appears to have paraphrased rather than closely translated the original of Callimachus, though how far he has improved upon or embellished his model it is of course impossible to say. In some degree this detracts from the interest of the poem—at any rate, when viewed in connection with the genius of Catullus. Still, it deserves a passing notice for its art and ingenuity, as employed after Catullus's manner, in blending beauty and passion with truth and constancy. It is curious, too, for its suggestive hints for Pope's "Rape of the Lock." The strain of compliment is obviously more Alexandrian than Roman; and readers of Theocritus will be prepared for a good deal in the shape of excessive compliment to the Ptolemys. But even in the compliment and its extravagance there is a considerable charm; and it is by no means uninteresting to possess, through the medium of an accomplished Latin poet, our only traces of a court poem much admired in its day. If, after all, the reception of Berenice's hair among the constellations forming the group of seven stars in Leo's tail, by the Alexandrian astronomers, is a matter of some doubt, it is at least clear that Callimachus did his best to back up Conon's averment of it, and that it suited Catullus to second his assertion so effectually, that it has befallen his muse to transmit the poetic tradition. The argument of the poem may be summarised. The Lock tells how, after its dedication by Berenice, if she received her lord from

the wars safe and sound, Conon discovered it a constellation in the firmament. He had returned victorious; the lock had been reft from its mistress's head with that resistless steel to which ere then far sturdier powers had succumbed—

"But what can stand against the might of steel?
'Twas that which made the proudest mountain reel,
Of all by Thia's radiant son surveyed,
What time the Mede a new Ægean made,
And hosts barbaric steered their galleys tall
Through rifted Athos' adamantine wall.
When things like these the power of steel confess,
What help or refuge for a woman's tress?"—(42-47.) M.

Need we suggest the parallel from Pope?—

"What time could spare from steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate.
Steel could the labours of the gods destroy,
And strike to dust the imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph, thine hairs should feel
The conquering force of unresisted steel?"

The tress proceeds to describe her passage through the air, and her eventual accession to the breast of Venus, thence to be transferred to an assigned position among the stars. A high destination, as the poem makes Berenice's hair admit, yet one (and here adulation takes its finest flight) which it would cheerfully forego to be once more lying on its mistress's head:—

"My state so glads me not, but I deplore
I ne'er may grace my mistress' forehead more,
With whom consorting in her virgin bloom,
I bathed in sweets, and quaffed the rich perfume."

In conclusion, the personified and constellated lock, with a happy thought, claims a toll on all maids and matrons happy in their love and nuptials, of an onyx box of perfume on the attainment of each heart's desire; and this claim it extends, foremost and first, to its mistress. Yet even this is a poor compensation for the loss of its once far prouder position, to recover which, and play again on Berenice's queenly brow, it would be well content if all the stars in the firmament should clash in a blind and chaotic collision :—

"Grant this, and then Aquarius may
Next to Orion blaze, and all the world
Of starry orbs be into chaos whirled."—M.

After a survey of the larger poems in the foregoing chapter, and that next before it, it would be especially out of place to attempt the barest notice of all that remains — a few very scurrilous and indelicate epigrams, having for their object the violent attacking of Cæsar, Mamurra, Gellius, and other less notable names obnoxious to our poet. By far the most part of these are so coarse, that, from their very nature, they are best left in their native language; and in this opinion we suspect we are supported by the best translators of Catullus, who deal with them sparingly and gingerly. Here and there, as in Epigram or Poem 84, Catullus

quits this uninviting vein for one of *purer* satire in every sense, the sting of it being of philological interest. Arrius, its subject, like some of our own countrymen, seems to have sought to atone for clipping his h's by an equally ill-judged principle of compensation. He used the aspirate where it was wrong as well as where it was right. The authors of a recent volume already alluded to—'Lays from Latin Lyres'—have so expressed the spirit and flavour of Catullus's six couplets on this Arrius, that their version may well stand for a sample of one of the most amusing and least offensive of his skits of this nature. It is, of course, something in the nature of a parody:—

"Whenever 'Arry tried to sound
An H, his care was unavailing;
He always spoke of 'orse and 'ound,
And all his kinsfolk had that failing.

Peace to our ears. He went from home;
But tidings came that grieved us bitterly—
That 'Arry, while he stayed at Rome,
Enjoyed his 'oliday in Hitaly."

And so we bid adieu to a poet who, with all his faults, has the highest claims upon us as a bard of nature and passion, and who was beyond question the first and greatest lyric poet of Italy.

TIBULLUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF ALBIUS TIBULLUS.

ALTHOUGH Catullus, as we have seen, lays some claim to the credit of acclimatising the elegy as well as other Greek types of poetry at Rome, the neatness and finish of that form of verse may be attributed to Albius Tibullus, a Roman of equestrian family, whose birthplace was Pedum, perhaps the modern village of Gallicano, and in his day so ruined and insignificant that it survived rather as the name of a district than as an ancient and once famous Latin city. Tradition has not preserved the poet's prænomen; but his birthdate was probably B.C. 54: and, like the two other tuneful brethren with whom we associate him, his life and career were brief. He is supposed to have died B.C. 18, according to an epigram of Domitius Marsus only a few months later than Virgil. As is the case with Catullus and Propertius, the data for a life of

Tibullus are scant and shadowy, and consist chiefly of an elegy of Ovid, an epistle of Horace, and a less authoritative life by an old grammarian, with the internal evidence to be extracted from the poet's acknowledged remains. As he nowhere names his sire, it is inferred that he died whilst he was yet a youth; but there are frequent and loving notices of his mother and sister. Apparently his family estates had been confiscated at the time of Cæsar's death, and his fortunes had undergone the same partial collapse which befell his poetic contemporaries, Horace and Virgil; but, like them, he clearly succeeded in recovering at least a portion of his patrimony, and this apparently by the good offices of his great patron, M. Valerius Messala, a chief of the ancient aristocracy, who, after the fashion of Mæcenas and Agrippa, kept up a retinue and mimic court of versifiers, and, it must be allowed, exacted no more of them than was his honest due. It was at Pedum, on his patrimonial estate between Tibur and Prænestе, some nineteen miles from Rome, that he passed the best portion of his brief but mainly placid life, amidst such scenes and employments as best fitted his rural tastes, indifferent health, and simple, contemplative, affectionate nature. In his very first elegy, he describes himself in strict keeping with his eminently religious spirit—which, it has been well remarked, bade him fold his hands in resignation rather than open them in hope—wreathing the god Terminus at the cross-roads, paying first-fruits to Ceres, setting up a Priapus to scare bird-pirates from his orchards, and honouring the Lares

with the offering of a lambkin, the substitution of which for the fatted calf of earlier days betrays the diminution of his fortunes. As Mr Cranstoun translates, the poet's admission runs thus :—

"Guards of a wealthy once, now poor, domain—
Ye Lares! still my gift your wardship cheers;
A fatted calf did then your altars stain,
To purify innumerable steers.

A lambkin now—a meagre offering—
From the few fields that still I reckon mine,
Shall fall for you while rustic voices sing:
'Oh grant the harvests, grant the generous wine!'"
—(C. i. 1. 45, &c.)

The probable dates of his allusions to changed fortunes, in the first book of elegies, forbid the conjecture of some of his biographers that these arose from his lavish expenditure on his mistresses; and it is certainly not so much of a dilapidated *roué* as of one who lived simply and within his income and means, that the shrewd-judging Horace wrote in Epistle iv. (Book I.)—

"No brainless trunk is yours: a form to please,
Wealth, wit to use it, Heaven vouchsafes you these.
What could fond nurse wish more for her sweet pet,
Than friends, good looks, and health without a let,
A shrewd clear head, a tongue to speak his mind,
A seemly household, and a purse well lined?"
—Conington.

Judging of him by his writings, and those of his friends, Tibullus, then, would strike us as a genial,

cheery, refined, but not foppish Roman knight; not overbearing, from having been very early his own master, but, for a Roman in his condition, of a singularly domestic character. It is clear that the court and livery of Augustus had no charms for him in comparison with the independence of his Pedan country-life, although an introduction to the former might have been had for the asking. His tone is that of an old-fashioned Conservative, disinclined to violent changes, holding the persuasion that "the old is better," and prepared to do battle for the good Saturnian times, before there were roads or ships, implements of husbandry or weapons of war. Nothing in his poems justifies the impression that his own meddling in politics had to do with whatever amount of confiscation befell him: indeed it may reasonably be assumed that, in pleading for restitution or compensation, his patron may have found his manifest aversion to politics as well as war very much in his favour. With Messala, who had fought against the Triumvirs under Cassius at Philippi, but had distinguished himself eminently at Actium on the side of Augustus, Tibullus had been early intimate, though he declined to accompany him to this decisive war in B.C. 31. Less than a year later, however, he did accompany him as aide-de-camp, or perhaps more probably as the bard of his prospective exploits, on a campaign to Aquitania, and was present at the battle of Atax (Ande in Languedoc), in which the rebel tribes were effectually quelled. In the seventh elegy of his first book, on the subject of Messala's

birthday, the poet gives, partly from eyewitness and partly from report (for he did not get further than Corcyra in B.C. 30, on his voyage with his patron on his Asiatic expedition), a sketch of the localities of Messala's victories, which may thus be represented in English:—

"Share in thy fame I boast; be witness ye,
Pyrene's heights, and shore of Santon sea:
Arar, swift Rhone, Garumna's mighty stream,
Yellow Carnutes, and Loire of azure gleam:
Or shall calm Cydnus rather claim my song,
Transparent shallows smoothly borne along?
How peaks of Taurus into cloudland peer,
Nor yet its snow the rough Cilicians fear?
Why need I tell how scatheless through the sky
O'er Syrian towns the sacred white doves fly?
How Tyre, with barks the first to trust the breeze,
Keeps from her towers an outlook o'er the seas?
Or in what sort, when Sirius cracks the fields,
The plenteous Nile its summer moisture yields."
—(Book I. C. vii. 9-22.) D.

It was ill-health of a serious kind, if we may judge from his misgivings in the opening of the third elegy of the first book, which cut short his second campaign at Corcyra; and there may probably have been as much justification for his step in a natural delicacy of constitution, as predisposition to it in his singularly unwarlike tendencies. At any rate, when he turned his back upon Corcyra, it was to say adieu for ever to the profession of arms; and thenceforth, though mentally following his patron's fortunes with affectionate interest, which often finds vent in song, he seems to have

given up all campaigns, except in the congenial fields of love and literature. No doubt, he had no objection on occasion to fight his few battles over again; and, as the broken soldier in Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village,'

"Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won,"—

so our poet was quite at home in telling as well as hearing the soldier's tale, with the aid of the wine-flask to map out the battle-fields with moist finger on the table. But Peace approved herself so much more to his mind that we find him constantly attributing to it the whole cycle of blessings; amongst others—

"Peace nursed the vine, and housed the juice in store,
That the sire's jar his offspring's soul should cheer;"

and it is with perhaps more heartfelt enthusiasm than that which he bestowed on the Gallic or Asiatic campaigns that he commemorates on Messala's birthday, already referred to, the peaceful services of that general to his country in reconstructing a portion of the Flaminian way out of the spoils which he had captured from the enemy. The lines in the original indicate that this great work was in course of construction when the seventh elegy was written; and it is not an uninteresting note that, as in our day, so of old, the road-maker was esteemed a public benefactor and the pioneer of civilisation. "Be thine," ends the poet—

"Be thine a race to crown each honoured deed,
And, gathering round thine age, swell honour's meed.
Frascati's youth and glistening Alba's son
Tell out the civil work thine hand hath done.

Thy wealth it is the gritty rock conveys,
The gravel strews, the jointed stones o'erlays:
Hence, since no more he stumbles home from town,
Hence, of thy road oft brags belated clown.
Come then for many a year, blest birthday, come,
And brighten each year more Messala's home!"—D.

In truth, the lot of Tibullus was fitter to be cast in such peaceful surroundings than in the wars and battle-fields of Rome, for empire far renowned. And therefore, with the exception of the sole warlike episode we have noticed, his subjects are mostly peaceful, and the poems, which are the chronicle of his life, pretty equally divided between praise of the country and commemoration of rustic festivals and holidays, and the praises or reproaches which he pours forth to his mistresses; for it does not seem that he exactly parallels his co-mates Catullus and Propertius in exalting his Delia to the same unapproached throne as Lesbia or Cynthia. Still the history of his loves demands quite as distinct a commemoration and illustration as that of those of his fellows; and it will therefore be convenient to reserve it to another chapter, gathering up into this present sketch what little remains to tell of the poet's biography distinct from these. If we may take Ovid's contributions to the record, it will be found in his "Tristia" that the fates allowed them no time for intimacy, but that Tibullus was read and known and popular in the reign of Augustus,—not, however, through any special cultivation of an imperial patron, whom he invariably ignores, though not because he had had no overtures

to become a bard of the empire. Enough for him to be stanch to an independent Roman noble, the most virtuous of his class, and to watch his opportunities of a well-timed poetical compliment to him or his. Thus when a rural feast is kept, and all are drinking healths and making merry, the health of the absent hero, Messala, is the toast he passes as an excuse for the glass (El. lib. ii. 1). Another special and appropriate poem (ii. 5) is written in honour of the eldest son of Messala, Marcus Valerius Messalinus, and of his election into the College of Fifteen to guard and inspect the Sibylline books in the Capitol, of which books he maintains the credit by pointing to the predicted eruption of Mount Ætna and eclipse of the sun in the fated year of Julius Cæsar's assassination. We hear very little indeed of our poet from his contemporaries, and next to nothing from him of them, out of the range of the Messaline family,—a proof of that addiction to rural pursuits and privacy, which, along with his loves, formed the staple of his muse. Even his death, as pictured by Ovid, looks exceedingly like a cento made up out of his own elegies; for that poet (Amor., iii. 9) makes his mother close his eyes, his sister hang over his couch and watch his pyre with dishevelled hair, and his mistresses lay claim to his preference at that sad last ceremony, in language that may well have been framed upon a study of the language of Tibullus, when, in El. i. 111, he anticipates death afar from these last tributes at Corcyra. In the absence of testimony we may infer that he died peacefully at home — peacefully, though somewhat

immaturely. Domitius Marsus reappears in Mr Cranstoun's quatrain—

> "Thee, young Tibullus, Death too early sent
> To roam with Virgil o'er Elysium's plains,
> That none might longer breathe soft love's lament,
> Or sing of royal wars in martial strains;"

and it is but fair to add, from Professor Nichol's admirable version of the "Mors Tibulli," Ovid's graceful asseveration that "Albius is not dead;" but that, if aught remains beyond the Stygian flood—

> "Refined Tibullus! thou art joined to those
> Living in calm communion with the blest;
> In peaceful urn thy quiet bones repose:
> May earth lie lightly where thine ashes rest!"
> —(Am. iii. 9.)

The present may be a convenient place for stating briefly that that portion of the Elegies attributed to Tibullus which is unquestionably authentic is limited to the first and second books; and that the first alone, in all probability, had the advantage of his own revision and preparation for the press. Amongst the arguments against the authenticity of the third and fourth books, there are some which can hardly be met by the cleverest special pleading, though we confess that Mr Cranstoun has shown considerable ingenuity in his conservative view of the question. It is, however, more probable that the elegies of the third book, which treat of the loves of Lygdamus and Neæra for the most part, and which perceptibly lack the spirit of Tibullus, whilst they evince quite a different talent,

where they exhibit any, were the work of some other poet in Messala's circle, whose name, or else *nom de plume*, may have been Lygdamus. As to the elegies of the fourth book (apart from the first poem, which is epic or heroic, and is panegyrical of Messala, though, for the most part, a raw and juvenile production, not worthy of Tibullus's genius), the general view is that they are worthier of Tibullus than the third book, but more probably the work of a female hand; and with one or two exceptions, that of the Sulpicia, a woman of noble birth, and of Messala's circle, whose love for Cerinthus or Cornutus is their chief feature. One thing is certain, that the range of the two earlier books will furnish abundant samples of each characteristic vein of the genuine Tibullus, who, though Dr Arnold coupled him as a bad poet with Propertius, and Niebuhr charged him with sentimentality, is nevertheless a poet of singular sweetness of versification, though unequal to his later elegiac brother in force and strength. Perhaps the adverse criticisms made upon him are due to the narrow range of his themes; but he is worth a study, no less for the independence of his mind and muse, than for the almost utter absence of any Alexandrine influence on his style, syntax, and language. Of pure taste and great finish, his genius is Italian to the core; and whilst he may lack the various graces of other poets of the empire before and after him, he is second to none in a tender simplicity and a transparent terseness, which are peculiarly his own. It may not be amiss to close this *chapter with* the just eulogium of this poet by Mr Crans-

toun, the most appreciative, and, on the whole, the most successful of Tibullus's translators. ("His love of home and friends, his enjoyment of the country, of hills and dales, of shepherds and sheepfolds, of smiling meadows and murmuring rivulets, of purple vineyards and yellow corn-fields, and of the innocence and simplicity of earlier days, combined with that tender melancholy which ever, cloud-like, threw a shadow o'er his brow, gives him an almost romantic interest in the eyes of modern readers; and will always secure for him, with lovers of rural scenes, one of the most enviable positions among the sons of ancient song."

CHAPTER II.

TIBULLUS AND HIS LOVES.

With his domestic qualities, his plaintive tone, and predisposition to contented enjoyment of rural happiness, Tibullus, under other conditions and another creed, might have found the ideal which he sought; but subjected to the caprices and inconstancy of one mistress after another, his life was alloyed by a series of unprosperous loves. If the third book, as has been stated, is in all probability the work of another hand, the sole attachment that promised a consummation in marriage, that with the compatible but uncertain Neæra, did not come upon the list of his loves. It was Delia, or, as her true name appears to have been, Plania (which the poet altered to affect the Greek), who first seriously engaged Tibullus's affections, and secured the tribute of his most perfect elegies. In condition, she appears to have been, like the Cynthia of Propertius, a hetæra, but of respectable parentage; and in some passages she is spoken of as if a married woman. The poet, at any rate, found a bar to marriage with her of some kind; and probably the inducement of a richer as well as a more permanent

connection, induced her to transfer herself to the wealthy spouse whom Tibullus pictures in his sixth elegy (Book i.) as deceived and outraged by her infidelities. But we ought to take Delia's self as painted in our poet's first and happiest colours. The first six elegies of the first book (with the exception of the fourth) tell more or less of his love for her, and are amongst the highest developments of his poetic power. His allusion in the fifth elegy to the beginning of her influence affords, at the same time, some clue to her personal charms. In declaring that her spell is so potent that, though they have quarrelled, he cannot forget Delia amidst other charmers, he analyses the nature of her ascendancy. Was it—

"By spells? No, by fair shoulders, queenly charms,
And golden locks, she lit this witching flame;
Lovely as to Hæmonian Peleus' arms,
On bridled fish the Nereid Thetis came."

There are indications, too, that she could be kindly and affectionate, and possessed such influence over him through her tenderness, albeit short-lived and inconstant, as to make him sit light on hopes of advancement from a patron, and rather disposed to spend his days with her in silken dalliance and in rural quietude. *Ecce signum:*—

"How sweet to lie and hear the wild winds roar,
While to our breast the one beloved we strain;
Or, when the cold South's sleety torrents pour,
To sleep secure, lulled by the plashing rain!

This lot be mine: let him be rich, 'tis fair,
Who braves the wrathful sea and tempests drear;
Oh, rather perish gold and gems, than e'er
One fair one for my absence shed a tear!

Dauntless, Messala, scour the earth and main
To deck thy home with warfare's spoils—'tis well;
Me here a lovely maiden's charms enchain,
At her hard door a sleepless sentinel.

Delia, I court not praise, if mine thou be;
Let men cry lout and clown—I'll bear the brand:
In my last moments let me gaze on thee,
And dying, clasp thee with my faltering hand."
—(i. 45-60.) C.

It is a characteristic of Tibullus, beyond almost any other of his elegiac brotherhood, that a tender melancholy breathes constantly through his poetry, and that the most pleasing pictures of serene content are anon overclouded by a tinge of sad forecast. Indeed, he makes the uncertain but lowering future an argument for using the present opportunities of enjoyment. Thus, in the close of the elegy from which we have just quoted, he mingles gay and grave:—

"Join we our loves while yet the fates allow:
Gloom-shrouded Death will soon draw nigh our door.
Dull age creeps on. Love's honeyed flatteries grow
Out of all season, where the locks are hoar"—D.

but seemingly in the end allows the gay spirit to predominate. Next apparently in order to the above elegy comes one composed by Tibullus on his sickbed in Corcyra (El. iii., bk. 1), and nominally addressed to Messala, though the burden of it first and last is

Delia, and Delia only. Out of it we glean not a few notices of Roman customs—*e.g.*, the resort of Delia to the luck of the dice-box to ascertain, before he started, the prospects her lover had of safe return, in spite of the favourable nature of which she had wept oft and ominously; the misgivings of the poet himself, based on ill omens; and the procrastination of his voyage, of which he laid the fault on the Jew's Sabbath being ill-starred for beginning a journey. Delia too consulted, we find, the fashionable goddess of Roman ladies of her period, Egyptian Isis, and clanged the brazen *sistra*, wherewith she was worshipped, with as much devout enthusiasm as the best of them. The poet assures himself that if her vows are heard, and the goddess answers her prayers, homage, and offerings, he shall rise from this bed of sickness, and, better than all, eschew war and its fatigues and alarms for the rest of his life-span. These, he suggests, are the indirect cause of his present serious illness; and some fine couplets contrast, in Tibullus's own view, the reigns of peaceful Saturn and his war-and-death-loving son. In a strain of mild depression he goes on to write his own epitaph as prefatory to an unfavourable termination to his malady; but it is amusing to note that he counts upon Elysium in the after-world on the score of his true love and stanchness in the present life:—

"But me, the facile child of tender Love,
Will Venus waft to blest Elysium's plains,
Where dance and song resound, and every grove
Rings with clear-throated warblers' dulcet strains.

Here lands untilled their richest treasures yield—
  Here sweetest cassia all untended grows—
With lavish lap the earth, in every field,
  Outpours the blossom of the fragrant rose.

Here bands of youths and tender maidens chime
  In love's sweet lures, and pay the untiring vow;
Here reigns the lover, slain in youthhood's prime,
  With myrtle garland round his honoured brow."
—(El. iii.) C.

It does not become directly obvious why after this happy prospect the poet goes off at a tangent to another and less inviting portion of the after-world, the abode of the guilty in Tartarus, where Tisiphone shakes her snaky tresses, and Ixion, Tityos, Tantalus, and the daughters of Danaus atone their treasons against Juno, Jove, and Venus. But the clue to the riddle is a little jealousy on the poet's part. He undisguisedly suggests that with these "convicts undergoing sentence" is the best place for a certain lover of Delia's, who took an undue interest in Tibullus's foreign service, and wished in his heart that it might be of long duration (iii. 21, 22). Too polite and too affectionate to hint that such ought to be her destination also, if untrue to her vows to himself, the poet adroitly bids her fence about her chastity with the company of her trusty duenna or nurse, to tell her stories, and beguile the hours of lamplight with the distaff and the thread. Taking heart from this pretty picture, which his fancy has wrought upon a pattern of Lucretian precedent, not out of date it would seem in good Roman houses, though it might be imagina-

tive to connect it with Delia's, Tibullus seems to change his mind about leaving his bones in Corcyra, or winging his spirit's flight to Elysium, and to prepare his mistress for his unexpected return :—

"So may I, when thy maids, with working spent,
And prone to sleep, their task by turns remit,
Upon thee, as by Heaven's commission sent,
Come suddenly, with none to herald it.

And thou, in dishabille, thy locks astray,
Barefoot to meet thy lover, Delia, run!
Goddess of morn, with rosy steeds, I pray,
Bring on betimes that all-auspicious sun."—D.

Whether thus unheralded or not, Tibullus certainly realised his desire of a safe return to home and Delia. The second elegy in the printed order appears to suit the date of the year after this return—B.C. 29, and discovers our poet in anything but the happiest relations with his mistress. Shut out, as was too often the lover's portion in the experience of the writers of Latin elegy, from his mistress's doors, and forestalled, it should seem, by a lover more favoured for the moment, he describes himself as solacing his chagrin in cups, and in prayers to Delia to have recourse to Venus for courage to elude her keepers. The goddess of good fortune is Venus, and "Venus helps the brave." Under her auspices, and in her service, the poet makes light of his dangerous and unseasonable vigils :—

"A fig for troubles; so my Delia's door
Ope, and her fingers snapt my entrance bid.
'Twere well, though, that each sex to pry forbore;
For Venus wills her laches to be hid."—D.

But lest such encouragements should not suffice to influence his coy inamorata, or her fears of offending the so-called "husband," who withholds her from him, should become confirmed, Tibullus adduces the assurances of a witch whom he has lately consulted to show that a way may be smoothed for their interviews as heretofore. Of this witch Tibullus gives a highly poetic description :—

"Her have I known the stars of heaven to charm,
The rapid river's course by spells to turn,
Cleave graves, bid bones descend from pyres still warm,
Or coax the Manes forth from silent urn.
Hell's rabble now she calls with magic scream,
Now bids them milk-sprent to their homes below:
At will lights cloudy skies with sunshine's gleam,
At will 'neath summer orbs collects the snow.
Alone she holds Medea's magic lore:
None else, 'tis said, hath power Hell's dogs to tame:
She taught me chaunts, that wondrous glamour pour,
If, spitting thrice, we thrice rehearse the same."
—(El. ii. 43-55) D.

The services of this functionary Tibullus professes to have secured to throw dust in his rival's eyes, though for the matter of that he lets fall a hint that, had he preferred it, she could have given him a spell that would enable him to forget her. But that was not his wish, the earnest desire rather of a lasting and mutual love. It would seem to be with a covert reference to his rival, a soldier probably, enriched with spoils and loot, and divided as occasion suited betwixt the fields of Venus and of Mars, that Tibullus drew the counterpart pictures of peace and war that follow,

and wondered why, as his desires were so simple, some adverse god denied him their fruition. He cannot tax his memory with sacrilege or slight to Venus, and protests that if he can have done any wrong unwittingly, he is ready to make full atonement. Possessed, however, of a conviction at whose door the estrangement of Delia is to be laid, he ends his elegy with a warning to the successful lover that his turn is to follow. This warning illustrates the fate of the trifler with affection and mocker of love, who in his old age succumbs to its chains himself, and whom his neighbours see—

"With quivering voice his tender flatteries frame,
And trim with trembling hands his hoary hair;
Lounge at the dear one's threshold, blind to shame,
And stop her handmaids in the thoroughfare.

While boys and youths thronged round with faces grave,
Each spitting on his own soft breast in turn—
But spare me, Venus, spare thy bounden slave!
Why dost thou ruthlessly thy harvests burn?"

This spitting into the bosom, a coarse and superstitious deprecation of evil or distasteful objects and consequences, common to the ancients, and still common among the Greeks, means in this case contempt for the old lover caught in his own toils, and may possibly be meant to convey a sly hint to Delia that

"Perchance her love to every one
May make her to be loved by none."

By the next year apparently, the date of the fifth elegy, matters are worse between Tibullus and Delia;

but the poet has abandoned his professed unconcern, and, in his distraction at lengthened separation, describes himself in a bad way :—

> "Driven like a top which boys, with ready art,
> Keep spinning round upon a level floor."
> —(El. v.[A] 3, 4.)

He descends from his vantage-ground of complaint, and makes a plenary recantation, enumerating at the same time arguments of services rendered, such as nursing her through a long and serious illness, and consulting enchantresses and approaching altars with a view to her recovery. Fondly, he adds, he had dreamed that the first-fruits of this would be the return of her attachment, a reconciliation which would enable him to carry out a scheme of rural happiness for the rest of their lives on his estate at Pedum, in which each should perform their appropriate household duties, and Delia's province should be undisputed rule over all the slaves born in the house, himself included as the merest cipher. She was to discharge votive offerings to the rural god, to pay tithe and first-fruit for the folds and crops, and, when the conquering hero Messala deigned to visit their retreat, to pluck him the sweetest apples from the choicest trees, and herself to wait upon him with a befitting banquet. The pretty domestic picture includes a vision of teeming baskets of grapes, and the same vats of pressed must which we read of in the ballad of Horatius as foaming "round the white feet of laughing girls." But, sighs Tibullus, this fancy sketch has come to

nought. East and south winds even now are bearing the fond dream away. Another is blest, and reaps the fruit of his own vows and solicitude. In a companion elegy, which recent editors have seen fit to distinguish from that on which we have just touched, the failure of his endeavours to console himself with some other fair one, or drown care in the wine-cup, is vividly described; and Delia's infatuation with her wealthier admirer attributed to the hired services of a witch, against whom Tibullus pours out a highly poetical volley of imprecations. Such a character, described as heralded by the screech-owl's hoot, and hungrily gnawing the bones which the wolves have discarded in the cemeteries, reminds one of the 'Pharmaceutria' in the Idylls of Theocritus, and Eclogues of Virgil, —or, more familiarly, of the Ghoules in the Arabian Nights. Still, however, there are harder words for all others than Delia, whose accessibility to the "golden key" is lightly noticed, while upon the successful rival is lavished a highly-drawn picture of the prospect awaiting him in the wheel of chance:—

"E'en now before her threshold not in vain
An anxious lover stops and prowls; nay, more,
Looks round, pretends to pass, returns again,
And stands and coughs before her very door.

I cannot tell what Love may have in store—
He works by stealth: but now enjoy thy dream,
While Fate permits to worship and adore;
Thy boat is gliding on a glassy stream."

—(V.[2] 71-76.) C.

Still less satisfactory are the relations of Delia and

Tibullus when next we meet them in the sixth elegy; for now a year more has flown, and the poet is changing his tactics, and twitting the present possessor of Delia's affections with her inconsistency, of which no one has had more experience. She is now apparently married to her rich admirer; but Tibullus has no idea of letting him have an easy pillow—if, indeed, the elegy is meant for his perusal, and not rather as banter for the fickle mistress who has given the poet up. The tone, in either case, is not such as to present the poet in a pleasant or natural light, when he mockingly, and in a style reminding us of Ovid in his 'Art of Love,' enumerates his own past devices to gain access to Delia, and to foil her guards and duennas, and quotes his experience as worth buying, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. As, however, in such loves, it would be quite out of course to know one's own mind, it is not a surprise to find the poet, in another poem of the same year, evidently clinging to the hope of a reconciliation, even after what should have seemed an unpardonable affront and insult; and striving to ingratiate himself with Delia by favourable mention of her mother—"a golden old woman," because she has always looked kindly on his addresses—who, he hopes, may live many years, and with whom he would be quite content to go halves in the residue of years yet in store for him—though not, we conclude, in the sense of spending them with her. At any rate, he goes the length of saying that he shall always love her, and her daughter for her sake, though he would be glad if she could teach that daughter to behave herself.

The mention of the ribbon (*vitta*), which confined the hair of freeborn ladies before and after marriage to distinguish them from frailer sisters, and of the *stole*, which was a distinctive part of the Roman matron's dress, as forming no part of Delia's attire, seems to cast a doubt upon her having even up to this time formed any legal or permanent connection; and though he hopes the contrary, it is plain that Tibullus forecasts for his Delia the fate of a fickle flirt, whose latter end is sketched at the close of the sixth elegy:—

"For the false girl, in want when youth has fled,
Draws out with trembling hand the twisted thread,
And forms of warp and woof her weary piece,
Biting the tufts from off the snowy fleece,
While bands of youth behold her, overjoyed,
And swear she's marvellously well employed;
Venus on high disdains her every tear,
And warns the faithless she can be severe."—C.

So far as Tibullus was concerned, it would seem that his patience finally failed not very long after this was written, and biographers fill Delia's place, after the last rupture, with one who is unnamed in his poetry, and unnoticed by Ovid in his references to Tibullus's loves. The heartless Glycera's connection with him rests, in fact, on a well-known ode of Horace; nor does the allusion to her in it (Ode i. 33) amount to much more than a philosophic counsel not to take on so, because the perjured fair one has made a younger choice. Our poet seems to have met with his usual luck, perhaps because too sentimental and in earnest for the mercenary charmers with whom he came in contact. It has

been supposed that the thirteenth elegy of the fourth book may be a sample of the "miserable or dolorous elegies" which he wrote to her, and to which Horace alludes; but if so, it "protests too much," exhibits too little independence, and rests too seriously upon Glycera for his happiness, to be likely to hold her affections. Women of her class are not really of one mind with the love-sick wooer who wishes "the desert were his dwelling-place, with one sweet spirit for his minister;" or, as Tibullus's mode of expressing the same sentiment is Englished—

> "Then the untrodden way were life's delight—
> Life's loved asylum the sequestered wood:
> Thou art the rest of cares: *in murky night*
> *A radiant star, a crowd in solitude.*"—C.

Glycera must have preferred a crowd of a more normal character, for ere long (it would seem within four or five years after the rupture with Delia) he is found in the toils of the mercenary and avaricious Nemesis, to whom he addressed the love elegies of the second book. If his amour with Glycera may be dated B.C. 24 or 23, the connection with Nemesis, who saw the last of him, began about the year B.C. 21. It does not seem to have had the excuse of such attractions as were possessed by Delia, for the poet is silent as to her personal beauty, although she exercised that influence over him, and made those exacting demands on his finances, which bespeak a fascination quite as overmastering. When we first hear of her, she has left him for the country (El. iii. bk. 2), and as he puts in the most exquisite of vignettes—

"Lo! Venus' self has sought the happy plains,
And Love is taking lessons at the plough"—C.

of course he needs must follow her, content to perform the most menial of peasant's duties, if only he may bask in her sunshine. A precedent for such a course is adduced in the mythic servitude of Apollo in the halls of Admetus—

"The fair Apollo fed Admetus' steers,
Nor aught availed his lyre and locks unshorn;
No herbs could soothe his soul or dry his tears,
The powers of medicine were all outworn.

He drove the cattle forth at morn and eve,
Curdled the milk, and when his task was done,
Of pliant osiers wove the wicker sieve,
Leaving chance holes through which the whey might run.

How oft pale Dian blushed, and felt a pang,
To see him bear a calf across the plain!
And oft as in the deepening dell he sang,
The lowing oxen broke the hallowed strain."—C.

"Happy days of old," sighs the poet, "when the gods were not ashamed of undisguised bondage to Love;" though, as he adds—

"Love's now a jest; yet I, who bow to love,
Would rather be a jest than loveless god."

A tirade which follows in this poem against war and lust of gain leads to the suspicion that now, as probably with Delia, some richer mercantile or military rival is in the poet's thoughts. The picture drawn of the spoils of land and sea, the foreign stone imported to Italy and

dragged along Roman thoroughfares, and the moles, which stem hitherto resistless seas, and protect the fish against the sway of winter, is set over against the simplicity of Tibullus's *ménage* and primitive establishment; but, as if he knew beforehand that her taste would repudiate such simplicity, he affirms that if luxury and expense be the *penchant* of Nemesis, he will turn his thoughts to pillage and rapine, to procure her the means of it. His own tastes recoil from fashion and finery, and go back to the pastoral way of their ancestors, but he is prepared to sink his tastes—

"That through the town his Nemesis may sail,
Eyed of all eyes, for those rich gifts of mine—
The Coan maidens' gauze-spun robes and veil,
Inwrought and streaked with many a golden line."
—D.

Such promises and professions were no doubt the condition of his retaining even a share in her favour, but a misgiving arises that he competes at unequal odds with a richer upstart, of whom he bitterly hints—

"The truth be told, he's now her bosom's lord,
Whom oft of old the slave-mart's rule compelled
To lift to view, imported from abroad,
The foot-soles which a tell-tale chalk-mark held."
—D.

Professions, however, in Nemesis's school, are nothing without practice. The more she exacts, the faster becomes his bondage; and he is not long in finding that it was a delusion to dream that songs and love-ditties would countervail more substantial presents—

"With hollowed palm she ever craves for gold."

It is of no use for poets to rail against luxury and the fashionable temptations to female extravagance in Coan robes and Red Sea pearls; no use to set "the girl who gives to song what gold could never buy" over against her whose principle is to sell herself to the highest bidder. Nemesis is not the sort of mistress to be wrought upon by the "less or more" of posthumous regrets, and so Tibullus resigns himself to sacrifices which his instinct tells him she will appreciate. If her cry of "Give, give" demands it, he protests—

> "My dear ancestral home I'll set to sale—
> My household gods, my all for her resign."

After this protestation, addressed to such as Nemesis, it was simply a poetical surplusage to profess to be ready to drink any number of love-potions; and it is satisfactory to be able to think that even the sacrifice of his patrimony came to no more than the figure of speech that it was. Nemesis is incidentally mentioned in the complimentary "Elegy to M. Valerius Messalinus," of which mention has been made already, and of which the date was about B.C. 20, in terms that bespeak her influence over the poet's mind and muse, and imply that if he is to live to celebrate in verse the family of Messala, it will be through happy relations with her, his latest love. A year after—the year before that of his death—another elegy (vi. B. ii.) represents him bent on following his friend and brother poet, Macer, to the wars, by way of escaping Nemesis's caprices. Till now he has allowed hope of better treatment to sustain him, and even now he lays the

blame on a false and odious go-between, who pleads her mistress's illness or absence from home, when her voice gives the lie to the excuse. It is characteristic of Tibullus that he finds it almost impossible to think any evil of his unscrupulous enslavers, and always creates a deputy, in the person of whom they receive his reproaches and curses. In the year B.C. 18, it would appear, Tibullus succumbed to repeated inroads on a health always delicate, and died, as we learn from Ovid, with his hand clasped in that of Nemesis. The picture of his obsequies drawn by the author of the 'Amores' may be in part a fancy sketch, where, for example, it represents Delia and Nemesis embracing at the funeral pyre, and the newer love waving the earlier off with assurances that—

"Dying, he clasped his failing hand in mine;"

whilst Delia faltered out that, in her reign, death and failing health were not so much as thought of; but it is consistent enough that the avaricious Nemesis may have closed his eyes, and taken the slight needful pains to keep her ascendancy to the end. Whilst the chapter of Tibullus's "generally unprosperous loves" cannot be regarded as in all respects edifying, it is essentially part and parcel of his life and poetry, and, all things considered, redounds far more—in what has been seen—to his credit and goodness of heart than to that of his successive paramours.

CHAPTER III.

TIBULLUS IN HIS CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS CAPACITY.

THOUGH on a cursory glance it might appear that Tibullus was wholly absorbed in his loves, and when suffering depression through their ill success took a gloomy view of the world's moral government, no careful student of his poetry can fail to notice how stanch an observer he was of the old rites and customs of his fathers, and how much the punctual fulfilment of the ancient ritual of his country's religion, to say nothing of its later and foreign accretions, was a law to him. In keeping with this characteristic religiousness, he duly reverenced with offerings of first-fruits the lone stump or old garland-wreathed stone which represented the god of the country in the fields or crossways, he duly kept the holidays of the Roman Calendar, he offered to the Genius customary and propitiatory sacrifices on his own or his patrons' birthdays. Hence, as well as for the collateral lore which pious performance of such ceremonies would accumulate, one special phase of interest in his poetry is, so to speak, antiquarian; and modern readers may look to him not in vain for light upon at least the rustic

festivals of Italy, some of which find a curious parallel in old English customs growing daily more nearly obsolete. One very remarkable example is the Festival of the Ambarvalia, to which Tibullus devotes the first elegy of his second book, in a description which is, along with a well-known passage of the First Georgic of Virgil, a chief *locus classicus* touching this rural celebration. That which the poet describes must be regarded as the private festival held towards the end of April by the head of every family, and not the public and national feast performed by the Fratres Arvales in May. This festival, held in honour not of Ceres only, as it might seem from Virgil, but of Mars also, as we gather from Cato's treatise on Rustic matters, and, as we learn from Catullus, of Bacchus and the gods of the family, and even Cupid, took its name from the chief feature—of the victim offered on the occasion being thrice solemnly led round the fields before the first sheaf of corn was reaped, or the first bunch of grapes cut. In its train followed the reapers, vine-pruners, farm-servants, dancing and singing praise to Ceres or Bacchus, and making libations of honey, wine, and milk. The object was the purification and hallowing of themselves, their herds, their fields and fruits, by the rural population of Latium; and it was supposed to keep plague and pestilence from the border which the procession perambulated. As to the victim, an earlier admission of Tibullus in the course of his poems lets us into the fact that with him, owing to his circumstances, it was only a lamb, whereas richer worshippers offered either a calf, or sometimes a lamb,

calf, and sow (*suovetaurilia*) together; but in all cases the festival wound up with a carousal and jollification for all concerned, and furnished to the rural population a picturesque and looked-for anniversary. Those who are curious in finding parallels and origins for their own country's old customs will trace to the Ambarvalia the "Gang-days" or walkings of the parish bounds in religious procession, which still linger in old English parishes and boroughs, and which at the Reformation were substituted for a festival celebrated in the Latin Church during three days at Whitsuntide. In this, one main object seems to have been to solicit God's blessing on the land and its crops; and intimately connected with the ceremonial which led to Rogation Days being called Gang-days, was a customary procession. Feasting, also, and revelry, were not forgotten; though in the present day the sole surviving feature is, here and there, perambulation of the boundaries—a relic, doubtless, of the very lustration of which Tibullus gives the prettiest picture extant. According to him, the whole face of nature was to keep holiday, whether animate or inanimate, in honour of Bacchus, Ceres, and their associate deities. Even women were to lay by their spindles, and with ablutions, purifications, and white raiment, place themselves in accord with so pure a festival:—

"This festal day let soil and tiller rest!
Hang up the share, and give all ploughing o'er;
Unstrap the yokes. Each ox, with chaplets drest,
Should feed at large a well-filled stall before.

See the doomed lamb to blazing altars led,
White crowds behind with olive fillets bound;
That evil from our borders may be sped,
Thus, gods of home, we lustrate hind and ground.

That ye may fend from all mischance the swain,
And from our acres banish blight and bale,
Lest hollow ears should mock our hope of grain,
Or 'gainst weak lambs the fleeter wolf prevail.

Bold in his thriving tilth the farmer then
Logs on a blazing hearth shall cheerly pile;
And slaves, by whom their master's ease we ken,
Frolic, and wattle bowers of twigs the while."
—(C. ii. 1. 5-24.) D.

From the immediate context we gather that, if the auspices were favourable on the showing of this rural sacrifice, it was a signal for general relaxation and merry-making. Tibullus would call for Falernian of a prime old brand, and broach a cask of Chian to boot. The revelry which in his view of things would appropriately follow, reminds one of the orgies in which, according to the song, "no man rose to go till he was sure he could not stand." Constant toasting of absent friends and patrons induced a moistness and a reeling gait, which on this occasion was not a reproach or shame, but quite the contrary. It was, says Tibullus, a usage of primeval precedent in the golden age of man's innocency, when first the rural gods bore a hand in instructing him to harvest his fruits, and Bacchus assisted in organising the choral song and dance which celebrated such harvests. Even Cupid, who was country-born and country-bred, should be

bidden, he adds, to this rural ceremonial, for it makes all the difference whether the flock and its master experience the smile or frown of the much-praised god:—

"Great Cupid, too, 'tis said, was born and nurst
'Mongst sheep and cattle and unbroken mares;
There with unskilful bow he practised first,—
Now what a skilful hand the weapon bears.
Not cattle now, as heretofore, his prey,
But blooming maids and men of stalwart frame;
He robs the youth and makes the greybeard say,
At scornful maiden's threshold, words of shame."

But, if he comes, he is to leave aside his bow, and hide his torches. The date of this elegy is probably the year B.C. 23.

In the fifth elegy of the second book, to which allusion has been already made as that in which Messala's eldest son, Messalinus, is complimented on his election into the College of Fifteen, one picture or episode of rural life describes the festival of the Palilia. This was a very ancient Italian holiday, partaking even more than the Ambarvalia of the character of a lustration, inasmuch as in it fire and water were used to purify shepherds and sheep, hinds, herds, and farm-buildings. This festival fell on the traditionary birthday of the city of Rome, and was kept in honour of Pales, the tutelary goddess of shepherds, such as were Rome's founders. To her were offered prayers, and sacrifices of cakes, millet, milk, and various eatables,—one solemn preliminary, according to Ovid, being the composition of the smoke

with which stalls, sheep, and shepherds were purified. In the evening, after the lustration, bonfires were lighted, through the smoke of which the flocks were driven with their shepherds thrice; a second purification, to which succeeded an open-air feasting on turf benches. To this festival, which is fully described by Ovid in his 'Fasti' (iv. 731, &c.), allusion is made also in the Elegies of Propertius (v. iv. 75. Paley). The picture as given by Tibullus may be here represented, with a note or two, from the version of Mr Cranstoun:—

"On Pales' festival, the shepherd, gay
With wine, shall sing: then wolves be far away.
Wine-maddened, he will fire the stubble-heap,
And through the sacred flames with ardour leap.
His wife will bring her boy his heart to cheer,
To snatch a kiss, and pull his father's ear.
Nor will the grandsire grudge to tend the boy,
But prattle with the child in *doting* joy.
The worship o'er, the youths upon the glade
Will lie *beneath some old tree's glancing shade;*
Or with their garments screen their rustic bowers,
Fill full the bowl, and crown the wine with flowers;
Each bring his feast, and pile green turf on high,
Turf that shall festive board and couch supply.
Where drunk, the youth his sweetheart will upbraid,
And shortly after wish his words unsaid.
Though *bearish* now, he'll sober down to-morrow,
Swear he was mad, and shed the tear of sorrow."
—(C., p. 62, 63.)

The italicised epithets have been inserted as more literal, and the italicised lines as needing illustration.

The custom of leaping through the fire, under the notion of being purified by the smoke, is alluded to by Propertius likewise; and is said by Mr Keightley to be still kept up in parts of Ireland and Scotland. The seemingly disrespectful liberty taken by the child with his father's ears, is explained by the peculiar and playful kiss, given by a person to another whose ears he held by way of handles, which Greeks and Romans occasionally practised, and which was called by the latter *chutra*. As to the old tree at the village centre, the cross-roads, or district boundary, it belongs to all time, and was the natural trysting-place for the festival of Pales, as many an ancient oak or elm discharges a like office, or designates a like tryst, in our English counties.

The scrupulousness with which Tibullus kept these rural festivals, observed his dues to Ceres, Silvanus, and the Lares, and set up a Priapus in his orchard, accommodated against stress of weather by a shady grot, might or might not be taken as an argument that two elegies in the third and fourth books, alluding to the Matronalia, were from his muse, and not another's. One so wrapt up in the country may have done all, when he had discharged his duties to the deities presiding over it; or, on the other hand, one who made so much of birthdays and anniversaries, might have made a point of including among his special feasts the first day of the first month (March) of the sacerdotal year, the festival Matronalia in honour of Juno, the goddess of married women, a season when not only husbands but lovers were wont to present their loves

with gifts, designated *strenæ*, the *étrennes* of New Year's Day in Paris. The first elegy of the third book draws a lively picture of the stir and bustle of a day not unlike St Valentine's morning in its latest development; and the second in the fourth book, an elegant and erotic performance, commends Sulpicia's beauty as she appears dressed for this festival. Neither, however, has the detail and the descriptiveness of Tibullus's pictures of the rural feasts. Both may well have emanated from one of Messala's set of *protégés;* but any one imbued with the tone and spirit of his genuine elegies will hesitate to admit these into that category. But this same scrupulousness and exactness to which we have referred, besides attesting the religious spirit, according to the light that was in him, of Albius Tibullus, extended itself to his civil status and conduct, in relation to the powers that then were. Not improbably he was at heart an old-fashioned waif and stray of the republic, for whom it was enough to be admitted to the literary circle of that virtuous representative of the old Roman nobles, Messala; and who, while acquiescing in the imperial rule from inability, and probably disinclination, to take a prominent or active part in politics or social matters, made a point of maintaining his independence, by keeping aloof from the cohort of the bards of the empire. Though Ovid can elegise his tuneful predecessor in strains which were no more than justly due to one to whom his own poetry owed not a little, and imagine him in death associated with Catullus, Calvus, Gallus, and other poets, we do

not find Tibullus cultivating or even naming Augustus or his ministers, or the members of his literary coteries. How much or little Horace knew of him depends upon the genial Venusian's evidence in a single ode and a single epistle; and that evidence does not go for much. There is nothing to prove that his goodwill was warmly reciprocated; whilst Ovid, who was much junior to Tibullus, did not enjoy his personal friendship. There is, at all events, considerable negative evidence that our poet valued and cherished his independence; and good ground for believing that he maintained it. Whether there is enough to justify Dean Merivale's theory, "That he pined away in unavailing despondency in beholding the subjugation of his country," it would be hard to pronounce, in the face of his slightly unpatriotic and un-Roman deprecation of military service, his fondness for ease and rustication, and his undeniable life of somewhat Anacreontic self-pleasing; but on the other hand, there is ample ground for the idea, broached and shadowed forth by the same eminent historian, that Tibullus "alone of the great poets of his day remained undazzled by the glitter of the Cæsarian usurpation." * Akin to this independence of principle is Tibullus's exceptional independence in literary style: whilst all his contemporaries were addicting themselves to Greek mythology and Alexandrine models, he stood alone in choice of themes and scenes best suited to his purely Italian genius. His terse,

* History of Rome under the Empire, iv. 602.

clear, simple language, as well as thought, distinguish him equally from the learning and imagination of Catullus, and the artificial phraseology and constantly-involved constructions of Propertius. He deserves the meed of natural grace and unrestrained simplicity, and ranks amongst his elegiac contemporaries as *par excellence* the poet of nature. In some respects his genius might compare with that of Burns, though in others the likeness fails; and perhaps it is owing to his limited range of subjects that he has not been more translated into English. Dart's translation, as well as that of Grainger, is almost forgotten; the partial translations of Major Packe and Mr Hopkins quite so. A few neat versions of Tibullus which occur in 'Specimens of the Classic Poets,' are due to Charles Abraham Elton, the scholarly translator of Hesiod; but it is to Mr James Cranstoun that the English reader who wishes to know more of this poet than can be learned in a comparatively brief memoir and estimate, must incur a debt such as we have incurred in the foregoing page.

PROPERTIUS.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE OF PROPERTIUS.

Of the youngest member of the elegiac trio it is not hard to approximate the birth-date and establish the birthplace. With reference to his full designation it will suffice to say that the name of Sextus rests on fair authority, whilst there is nothing but a copyist's blunder and confusion of our poet with Prudentius to account for the second name of "Aurelius" sometimes erroneously given to him. As to the date of our poet's birth, Ovid tells us in his "Tristia"* that he was younger than Tibullus, but older than himself, so that whereas with Tibullus he had little time for intimacy, with Propertius he enjoyed a tolerably close literary acquaintance. This would enable us to place his birth somewhere betwixt B.C. 54 and 44, and there is a probability that it was about

* IV. x. 51-54.

B.C. 49. Like his predecessors in Roman elegy, he was country born and bred: nursed in the Umbrian town of Asisium in Upper Italy, amidst the pastures of Mevania, near the source of the Clitumnus, unless in preference to his own evidence we choose to credit the comparatively modern story which connects the poet and his villa with "Spello," the modern representative of the ancient town of Hispellum in the same neighbourhood. Propertius, indeed, is tolerably circumstantial on the subject where in his fifth book * he makes the old Babylonish seer, who dissuades him from attempting archæological poems about "early Rome" and the like, evince a knowledge of his antecedents by telling him—

> "Old Umbria gave thee birth—a spot renowned—
> Say, am I right? is that thy native ground?—
> Where, dewy-moist, lie low Mevania's plains,
> Where steams the Umbrian lake with summer rains,
> Where towers the wall o'er steep Asisium's hill,
> A wall thy genius shall make nobler still."

This account, it should be observed, is consistent with the poet's direct answer to the queries of his friend Tullus concerning his native place at the end of the first book, that—

> "Umbria, whose hill-border crowns
> The adjacent underlying downs,
> Gave birth to me—a land renowned
> For rich and finely-watered ground."

The steaming waters, which are called the Umbrian

* El. i. *ad fin.*

lake in the first passage, are doubtless the same which are credited with fertilising power in the second: the same sloping river (as the derivation imports) of Clitumnus, which a scholiast upon the word in the second book of Virgil's 'Georgics' declares to have been a lake as well as a river. The *locale* is of some importance, seeing that it enhances our interest if we can trace the lifelike scenes of Propertius's more natural muse to his recollections of the Umbrian home, from which he had watched the white herds of Clitumnus wind slowly stall-ward at eve, had heard the murmurs of the Apennine forests, and gazed with delight on the shining streams and pastures of moist Mevania. Scarcely less so, if we can account for the exceptionally rugged earnestness of his muse by the reference to his Umbrian blood, and the grave and masculine temperament peculiar to the old Italian races. In parentage, Propertius was of the middle class, the son of a knight or esquire who had joined the party of Lucius Antonius, and to a greater or less extent shared the fate of the garrison of Perusium, when captured by Octavius. A credible historian limits the massacre there to senators of the town and special enemies; but the elder Propertius, if he came off with his life, was certainly mulcted in his property; for whilst there are some expressions of the poet to show that his sire's death was peaceful, though premature, it is certain that a large slice of his patrimony had to go as a sop and propitiation to the veterans of Augustus. The poet's reminiscences of his early home must, like those of Tibullus, have been associated

with the hardships of proscription and confiscation; with early orphanage and forfeited lands; with such shrunken rents and decimated acreage, as made a young man all the keener to bring his wits into the market, and perchance to develop talents which would have "died uncommended," had the stimulus of stern necessity not existed. In the same elegy * already alluded to, allusion is made to the sweeping encroachments of the ruthless "government measuring-rod," which made him fain, when he assumed the manly toga, and laid aside the golden amulet worn by the children of the freeborn or "ingenui," to relieve his widowed mother of the burden which his father's premature death had devolved on her, and to repair to Rome with a view to completing his training for the bar. That he was obliged to content himself with an ordinary preparation, and to forego the higher Attic polish, is clear from an admission to his friend Tullus † that he has yet at a much later period to see Athens; but further, we may guess that his keeping terms at the bar soon became only his ostensible occupation in life, and that like young Horace the treasury clerk, and Virgil the suitor, and Tibullus the claimant, the channel which led to real fame and competence was—poetry.

> "Then Phœbus charmed thy poet-soul afar
> From the fierce thunderings of the noisy bar."

Of how many modern divines, and essayists, and *lit-*

* V. i. 129-134. † I. vi. 13.

terateurs has not the original destination been similar, and similarly diverted! It was essential, doubtless, to Propertius's success in this divergent occupation and livelihood that he should find a patron, to become to him what Mæcenas was to Horace, and Messala to Tibullus. Later on, he got introduced to the great commoner, prime minister, and patron, whose inner circle on the Esquiline assured distinction in letters to all its members: but his first patron was Volcatius Tullus, the nephew of L. Volcatius Tullus, consul in B.C. 33 and proconsul in Asia, who was of the poet's own age, and probably his uncle's lieutenant. To this Tullus are addressed several of the elegies of the first book, and it is reasonable to think that the link between patron and client was one of equal friendship. A little of the proper pride of the Umbrian rhymer comes out in what he writes to Mæcenas, at a subsequent period, deprecating public station and prominence, and delicately suggesting that in eschewing these and loftier themes he does but imitate the retiring modesty of his patron.)

Before, however, we discuss his relations with patrons and contemporary poets, it were well to glance at the sources and subjects of his trained and erudite muse. If ever epithet was fitted to a proper name, it is the epithet of "doctus" or "learned" in connection with that of Propertius. More than Catullus, infinitely more than Tibullus, Propertius was imbued with and bathed in the Alexandrian poetry and poets. Again and again he calls himself the disciple of the Coan Philetas, and his ambition was to be, what Ovid designates

him, the "Roman Callimachus." That this ambition was detrimental at times to his originality and true genius, there is abundant proof in the perusal of his elegies. His too much learning, his stores of Alexandrian archæology, overflow upon his love-elegies in such wise as to impress the reader with the unreality of the erudite wooer's compliments, and to make him cease to wonder that Cynthia jilted him for a vulgar and loutish prætor. And this was not confined to his love-poems. Where he deals with Roman and Italian legends, he is apt to overcumber them with parallels from foreign mythland: and it may be said without controversy that where he fails in perspicuity, and induces the most irrepressible tedium, is in his unmeasured doses of Greek mythology.

It is the general opinion of scholars that the essentially Roman poems of Propertius were his first attempts in poetry, and that he took the lost "Dreams," as he styles that poet's epic, of Callimachus for his model of their style. If so, it is no less probable that the self-same themes occupied his latest muse, the mean space being given up to his erotic, and, *par excellence*, his Cynthian elegies. From his own showing, the brilliant and fascinating mistress who bewitched him, as Lesbia and Delia (we call all three by their poets' *noms de plume*) had bewitched Catullus and Tibullus, was the fount and source, the be-all and end-all, of his poetic dreams and aspirations. Nevertheless, it may be doubted whether Propertius did not give, in some of his poems on early Rome, *earnests* of a more erudite, if a less attractive, bal-

ladic gift, than the more facile Ovid, whose 'Fasti' have cast into shade his predecessor's experiments in turning the Roman Calendar into poetry. Reserving the story of his loves for another chapter, it will be advisable that in the present we should confine ourselves to the record of his life and career, independently of that absorbing influence. (It was no doubt a turning-point for him, when Propertius gained introduction and acceptance into the literary coterie of Mæcenas.) (Although his difference in age, and his probably less courtly manners and temper, interfered with his admission to the same close intimacy as the lively Venusian in the minister's villa and gardens on the Esquiline, there is abundant internal evidence that he was welcomed there not only for his merit as a poet, but also for the special purpose of all the introductions to that brilliant circle—namely, to nurse and raise up a meet band of celebrants of the victories and successes of Augustus.) (In an elegy * which evinces the depth and breadth of his archæological and mythologic lore, the poet is found excusing his inability to write epics or heroics, though he adds that, could he essay such themes, it should be to commemorate the deeds of the victor at Actium, the triumphs in which golden-fettered kings were led along the Via Sacra, and the praise of his stanch friend and servant—

"In time of peace, in time of war, a faithful subject aye."

* II. i.

In the same spirit is breathed the address to the same patron in the ninth elegy of the fourth book, where, deprecating heroic poetry, Propertius gracefully professes his readiness to rise to the height of that high argument, if Mæcenas will set him an example of conquering his own innate dislike to prominence, and assume his proper rank and position. If it is true of the patron that—

"Though Cæsar ever gives the ready aid,
And wealth profusely proffered never fails—
Thou shrink'st, and humbly seek'st the gentle shade,
And with thine own hand reef'st thy bellying sails"—

the poet-client insinuates that it ought to be enough for himself—

"Enough, with sweet Callimachus to please,
And lays like thine, O Coan poet, weave:
To thrill the youth and fire the fair with these,
Be hailed divine, and homage meet receive."

Indeed, if ever his instinctive conviction of his proper *métier* is shaken by the importunities of those who would have won him over to the laureateship of the imperial eagles, he speedily and wisely recurs to his first and better judgment. It may be he had discovered that to cope with such a task he needed greater plasticity of character than accorded with his Umbrian origin —that he would have to smooth over defects, and magnify partial successes. Even where in the first elegy of the third book he seems to be qualifying for the office, and preluding his task by graceful compliments to Augustus, not only do the spectres of the slaughtered

Crassi come unbidden across the field of compliment opened by the emperor's successes in the East, but chronology satisfies the reader that poetic flourishes about vanquished India, and about "Arabia's homes, untouched before, reeling in grievous terror," could not rearrange or unsettle the order of fate, that not very long, probably, after the composition of this elegy the expedition sent against Arabia under the command of Ælius Gallus should come to unlooked-for defeat and disaster. Propertius's sounder mind falls ever back upon themes that involve no such risk of misadventure from flattery or false prophecy; and if he plumes himself for a higher flight, it is in the strain of undisguised deprecation of his daring—

"As when we cannot reach the head of statues all too high,
We lay a chaplet at the feet, so now perforce do I,
Unfit to climb the giddy heights of epic song divine,
In humble adoration lay poor incense on thy shrine:
For not as yet my Muse hath known the wells of Ascra's grove:
Permessus' gentle wave alone hath laved the limbs of Love. —(III. i. *ad fin.*)

It is hard to conceive with what justice, when such was the poet's deprecation of the court laureate's task (to say nothing of other inconsistencies in the theory), it can have occurred to some critics and speculators to identify Propertius with the "bore" who pestered Horace through the streets and ways, as he describes in his satire.* The weight of Dean Merivale's name

* Hor., Sat. I. ix. *passim.*

and knowledge may, it is true, impart strength to this conjecture; but assuredly a fair comparison of all the data we can collect from external and internal sources towards the life of Propertius does not lead to the conclusion that he was one to intrude himself on the great or the successful, or that lack of opportunities of introduction to the court of Augustus, or the villa and gardens of Mæcenas, drove him to annoyance and importunity of such as had the *entrée* to either. It has always seemed to us a strong note of difference, that Horace's babbling fop is represented as addressing his victim in short cut-and-dried interjective remarks, the very opposite of the high-sounding, learned, and perhaps stilted language which might have been expected of Propertius, a poet who, one should fancy, spoke, if he did not care to write, heroics—even as Mrs Siddons is said to have been, and talked, the queen, even off the stage. Considering the field open to him, and the invitations profusely given to him, this poet is entitled to the credit of extreme moderation as regards the incense heaped, after the fashion of his poetic contemporaries, upon the shrine of Augustus. His noted poem on the "Battle of Actium" * is a fine and grand treatment of a theme upon which to have been silent would have been as much an admission of inability to hold his own as a poet, as a proof of indifference or disloyalty to the victor in that famous fight; and who of his contemporaries would have thought anything of the pretensions of a bard who did not

* V. vi.

embody in such glowing verse as he could compose the engrossing subject of the discomfiture and subsequent tragedy of Cleopatra? There is little heed to be paid to the inference from the name of Propertius not being mentioned by Tibullus or Horace, that either held him in contempt, the former because he resented his claiming to be the Roman Callimachus. As we have seen, Tibullus did not affect Alexandrine erudition; and Propertius is entitled to his boast without controversy on Tibullus's part, though he might have found it hard to maintain it seriously in the face of Catullus. But of that poet's fame his elegies make but a small portion; and we are to remember that what Propertius prides himself upon was the introduction of the Greek or Alexandrine elegy into Latin song. If neither Tibullus nor Horace names him, at least Ovid makes the amend for this; and the fact that the poet is equally silent as to them, need not be pressed into a proof of insignificance, or churlishness, or literary jealousy, seeing that he is proven to have known, appreciated, and mingled familiarly with other scarcely less eminent poets of the period, not to omit his generous auguries of the epic poems of his friend Virgil. With Ponticus, a writer of hexameters, and author of a lost Thebaid, he was on terms of pleasant friendship, and not of rivalry in poetry or in love. He could pay graceful compliments to the iambics of his correspondent Bassus, though not without a feigned or real suspicion that that poet's design in seeking to widen the range of his admiration for the fair sex was an interested motive of stepping into Cynthia's good

graces.) (As to Virgil, Propertius, in an elegy to a tragic poet Lynceus (who probably owes the preservation of his name to his having presumed to flirt with Cynthia at a banquet), commends that great poet as being more fruitfully and worthily occupied; and commemorates his poetic achievements in strains that have not the faintest leaven of jealousy or grudge :—

"But now of Phœbus-guarded Actian shore,
And Cæsar's valiant fleets, let Virgil sing,

Who rouses Troy's Æneas to the fray,
And rears in song Lavinium's walls on high :
Yield, Roman writers—bards of Greece, give way—
A work will soon the Iliad's fame outvie.

Thou sing'st the precepts of the Ascræan sage,
What plain grows corn, what mountain suits the vine—
A strain, O Virgil, that might well engage
Apollo's fingers on his lyre divine.

Thou sing'st beneath Galæsus' pinewood shades
Thyrsis and Daphnis on thy well-worn reed;
And how ten apples can seduce the maids,
And kid from unmilked dam girls captive lead.

Happy with apples love so cheap to buy!
To such may Tityrus sing, though cold and coy:
O happy Corydon! when thou mayst try
To win Alexis fair—his master's joy.

Though of his oaten pipe he weary be,
Kind Hamadryads still their bard adore,
Whose strains will charm the reader's ear, be he
Unlearned or learned in love's delightful lore."
—(C. III. xxvi.)

Our quotation is from Mr Cranstoun's well-considered version, which in this instance embodies and represents the rearrangement of the original elegy by Mr Munro. It gives us allusions in inverted sequence to the 'Æneid,' the 'Georgics,' and the 'Eclogues,' and contains a reference to the neighbourhood of Tarentum, which draws from the editor of Lucretius the remark that Virgil may have taken refuge thereabouts in the days when he and his father lost their lands along with other Mantuans. "When I was at Tarentum some months ago, it struck me how much better the scenery, flora, and silva of these parts suited many of the 'Eclogues' than the neighbourhood of Mantua."* It is needless to say that the "precepts of the Ascræan Hesiod" refer to Virgil's imitation of that poet in his 'Georgics,' whilst the names of Thyrsis, Daphnis, Corydon, and Alexis recall the 'Eclogues,' and Tityrus represents Virgil himself. Galesus, celebrated also by Horace on account of its fine-fleeced sheep, was a little river in the neighbourhood of Tarentum, apparently the locality in which some of the 'Eclogues' were written.

Amongst other less specially literary friends of Propertius, to whom his elegies introduce us, were Ælius Gallus, already mentioned as the leader of an ill-starred expedition to Arabia; Posthumus, who, according to our poet in El. IV. xii., left a faithful wife for another campaign to the East, and whose wife's laments are supposed to be described in the pleasing third elegy of the fifth book, that of Arethusa to Lycotas. Of

* Journal of Philology, vi. 41

Volcatius Tullus and his patronage we have taken notice above. The poet's elegies to him * affectionately speed his parting for the East, and in due course long to welcome his return to the Rome of his friends and ancestors. The first supplies, incidentally, evidence that Propertius had not, up to the date of it, visited Athens; and it is very doubtful whether—though in IV. xxi. he seems to contemplate a pilgrimage thither in the fond hope that length of voyage may make him forget his untoward loves, and though in I. xv. he gives a graphic picture of the dangers and terrors of a storm at sea—he ever really left his native shores, or indulged in foreign travel. There is much reason to agree with Mr Cranstoun that the absence of direct testimony on this point negatives the supposition; and his periodical threats of taking wing, and thrilling pictures of perils of waters, may perhaps be interpreted as only hints to his mistress to behave herself, and suggestions of desertion, which she probably valued at a cheap rate from a knowledge of her influence and attractions. Though full of the mythic lore of Greece, the poetry of Propertius betrays no eyewitness of its ancient cities or learned seats; and it is a more probable conclusion that he was a stay-at-home, though not unimaginative, traveller. His continued attachment to Cynthia—a long phase in his life-history to be treated separately—tends to this conclusion; and we know so little of him after the final rupture with her, that silence seems to confirm the unlocomotiveness of his few remaining years.

* I. vi. and IV. xxii.

In one so wedded to Greek traditions, a treading of classic soil must have reawakened long-banished song; but Propertius died comparatively young, like Catullus and Tibullus, and he probably ceased to write and to live about the age of thirty-four, or from that to forty. Though Pliny's gossip credits him with lineal descendants—which involves a legal union after Cynthia's death—there is everything in his extant remains to contradict such a story. He doubtless sang his mistress in strains of exaggeration for which one makes due allowance in gleaning his slender history; but substantially true was his constant averment that Cynthia was his last love, even as she was his first. It is irresistible to cling to the belief that the comparatively brief space of life he lived without her and her distracting influences was the period of his finest Roman poems, and of the philosophic studies to which his Muse in earlier strains looked forward. He is supposed to have died about B.C. 15. In his poetry he contrasts strongly with his co-mates Catullus and Tibullus. As erotic as the first, he is more refined and less coarse without being less fervent. On the other hand, he can lay no claim to the simplicity and nature-painting of Tibullus, though he introduces into his verse a pregnant and often obscure crowding of forcible thoughts, expressions, and constructions, which justify the epithet that attests his exceptional learning. In strength and vigour of verse he stands pre-eminent, unless it be when he lets this learning have its head too unrestrainedly. And though the verdict of critics would probably be that he is best in the love

elegies, and in the less mythologic portions of these, where pathos, fervour, jealous passion supply the changing phases of his constant theme, it may be doubted if some of the more historic and Roman elegies of the fifth book do not supply as fine and memorable a sample of his Muse, which inherited from its native mountains what Dean Merivale designates "a strength and sometimes a grandeur of language which would have been highly relished in the sterner age of Lucretius." His life and morality were apparently on the same level as those of his own generation; but if a free liver, he has the refinement to draw a veil over much that Catullus or Ovid would have laid bare. And though his own attachment was less creditable than constant, that he could enter into and appreciate the beauty of wedded love, and of careful nurture on the elder Roman pattern, will be patent to those who read the lay of Arethusa to Lycotas, or peruse the touching elegy, which crowns the fifth and last of his books, of the dead Cornelia to Æmilius Paullus.

CHAPTER II.

CYNTHIA'S POET.

As with Catullus and Tibullus, there would be scant remains of the poetry of Propertius—scant materials for a biography of him—if his loves and the story of them were swept out of the midst. With the poets of his school Love was the prime motive of song; and he was truly a sedulous example of his own profession :—

> "Many have lived and loved their life away :
> Oh, may I live and love, then die as they!
> Too weak for fame, too slight for war's stern rule,
> Fate bade me learn in only Love's soft school."
> —(I. vi. 27.) M.

Yet it must be confessed that, however forcible and fervid the verse in which he commemorates this love, the results fail to impress us with the same reality and earnestness as his predecessors, partly perhaps because "he makes love by book," and ransacks the Greek poets and mythologists for meet comparisons with his mistress; and partly because occasionally his verses betray the fickleness of a man of pleasure and gallantry, whose expressions and protestations are to be taken only at their worth. Famous as the elegies

to Cynthia have become in after-time, and customary as it is to regard Propertius as the sympathetic friend of ill-used lovers, we fear that Cynthia had too much justification for her inconstancy in his behaviour; and that however tragic his threats and resolutions, his passion for her was much less absorbing and earnest than that of Catullus for Lesbia, or Tibullus for Delia. His own confession (IV. xv. 6) acquaints us with an early love-passage for a slave-girl, Lycinna, before he was out of his teens; and though he assures Cynthia that she has no cause for uneasiness lest this passion should revive, a number of casual allusions make it manifest that at no period was he exclusively Cynthia's, though her spell no doubt was strongest and most enduring. Who, then, was this lovely provocative of song, to whom love-elegy is so much beholden? It seems agreed that the name of Cynthia is a complimentary disguise, like those of Delia and Lesbia: and according to Apuleius, the lady's real name was Hostia, derived from Hostius, a sire or grandsire of some poetic repute, and not improbably an actor or stage-musician,—an origin which would explain her position as born of parents of the freedman class. It would be consistent also with the tradition of her accomplishments and cultivation, which we find from Propertius to have been various and considerable, as indeed they had need to be, to appreciate the compliments of a bard whose escritoire must have teemed with classical and mythological parallels for her every whim and humour, for *every* grace of her form and every charm of her mind.

To borrow his manner of speech, Phœbus had gifted her with song, Calliope with the Aonian lyre: she excelled in attractive conversation, and combined the characteristics of Venus and Minerva. It cannot have been in empty compliment that Propertius styles her "his clever maid," and prides himself on his success in pleasing her in encounters of wit and raillery, or regards her appreciation of "music's gentle charms" as the secret of his favour in her eyes. The whole tone of his poetic tributes bespeaks a recognition of her equality as to wit and intellect, and we may fairly credit her with the mental endowments of the famous Greek *hetæræ*. Amongst her other attractions was a skill in music and dancing, commemorated by the poet in II. iii. 9-22:—

"'Twas not her face, though fair, so smote my eye
(Less fair the lily than my love: as snows
Of Scythia with Iberian vermil vie;
As float in milk the petals of the rose);

Nor locks that down her neck of ivory stream,
Nor eyes—my stars—twin lamps with love aglow;
Nor if in silk of Araby she gleam
(I prize not baubles), does she thrill me so

As when she leaves the mantling cup to thread
The mazy dance, and moves before my view,
Graceful as blooming Ariadne led
The choral revels of the Bacchic crew;

Or wakes the lute-strings with Æolian quill
To music worthy of the immortal Nine,
And challenges renowned Corinna's skill,
And rates her own above Erinna's line."—C.

The quatrains above quoted express the two-fold charm of intellectual and physical grace, and, with lover-like caution, weigh warily the preponderance of compliment to either side of the balance. If Cynthia's dancing is graceful as Ariadne's, and her music recalls the chief female names in Greek lyric poetry, Propertius introduces a subtle and parenthetic make-weight in praise of her exquisite complexion (which he likens, after Anacreon and Virgil, to rose-leaves in contact with milk, or "vermilion from Spain on snow"), her flowing ringlets, and her star-like eyes. Elsewhere he sings explicitly of her form and figure:—

> "The yellow hair, the slender tapering hand,
> The form and carriage as Jove's sister's, grand;"—D.

or again twits the winged god, Cupid, with the loss to the world he will inflict if he smite him with his arrows:—

> "If thou shouldst slay me, who is left to hymn
> Thy glory, though the champion be but slight,
> Who praises now her locks and fingers slim,
> Her footfall soft, her eyes as dark as night?"—D.

With these and many more hints for a portrait of his lady-love, to be gleaned from Propertius's impassioned description, it is no marvel that he was so plain-spoken in declining the solicitations of Mæcenas to exchange the elegy for the epic. To quote Mr Cranstoun on this subject, in his version of the first elegy of the *second* book:—

"It is not from Calliope, nor is it from Apollo,
But from my own sweet lady-love my inspiration springs.

If in resplendent purple robe of Cos my darling dresses,
I'll fill a portly volume with the Coan garment's praise:
Or if her truant tresses wreathe her forehead with caresses,
The tresses of her queenly brow demand her poet's lays.

Or if, perchance, she strike the speaking lyre with ivory fingers,
I marvel how those nimble fingers run the chords along;
Or if above her slumber-drooping eyes a shadow lingers,
My trancèd mind is sure to find a thousand themes of song.

Or if for love's delightful strife repose awhile be broken,
Oh! I could write an Iliad of our sallies and alarms;
If anything at all she's done—if any word she's spoken—
From out of nothing rise at once innumerable charms."

A charmer with so perfect a *tout ensemble* was certain to command the passionate admiration of so inflammable a lover; and hence the history of his erotic poetry consists in an alternation of his raptures, his remonstrances, his despairs, according as Cynthia was kind, or volatile, or cruel. And to tell the truth, a lover of Cynthia could have had little smooth sailing on a sea where the winds of jealousy were evermore rising to a hurricane. He may not have been worthy of ideal fidelity, but certainly from the traits we have of Cynthia's faulty character, she must have given her bard and lover only too much cause for uneasiness. Fitful in her fancies, alike jealous and inconstant, she was expensive in her tastes,

extravagant in her addiction to dress, unguents, and ornaments; and a victim to the indulgence of the wine-cup, though the poet does not seem to have found so much fault with this, as with her partiality for the foreign worship of Isis, for which it will be recollected that Delia also had a weakness. All these proclivities suggest the costliness of such a union as that which, as far as we can judge, subsisted between Propertius and Cynthia,—not a union recognised by law, but a connection occupying the borderland between recognised respectability and open vice. Whilst a touching elegy (II. vii.) congratulates Cynthia on the throwing out or postponement of a law which would have obliged Propertius to take a wife and to desert his mistress, it is obvious that he enjoyed his immunity at a very costly price, to say nothing of her keen eye to the main chance, which made him justly fearful of the approach of richer admirers. Mr Cranstoun infers from the twentieth elegy of the fourth book "that a marriage of some sort existed between Propertius and Cynthia, in which the rights and duties of the contracting parties were laid down and ratified;" and doubtless such compacts were really made at Rome, even where, as in this case, legal matrimony was out of the question. But the bond was of a shifting and elastic nature; and if Propertius hugged his chain, it must have been with a grim sense at times of the cost and disquiet which it entailed upon him. Cynthia was dressy and extravagant, and if she took the air, loved to tire her hair in the newest fashion, to wear the diaphanous silk fabrics of Cos, and

to indulge in perfumes from the banks of the Syrian Orontes. Her poet may perhaps have had a doubt whether these adornments were all for his single sake, and this may have given a point to the praises of simplicity and beauty unadorned, which in several elegies gem his poetry. Thus in El. ii., B. I. :—

"With purchased gauds why mar thy native grace,
Nor let thy form on its own charms depend?
No borrowed arts can mend thy beauteous face:
No artist's skill will naked Love befriend.
See of all hues the winsome earth upsends,
How ivy with no training blooms the best.
How rarest grace and growth the arbute blends
In mountain dells remotest, loneliest!
And streams that glide in wild unstudied ways,
And shores with native pebbles glistering,
Outvie the attempts of art: no tutored lays
Sound half so sweet as wild bird's carolling."—D.

It is indeed hardly to be wondered that poetry of so didactic a strain had slight influence upon a lady of Cynthia's proclivities. Whilst there were others, if Propertius failed her, who, if they could not dower her with song or elegy, had purse-strings to relax at her bidding, when

"For fan a peacock's tail she now demands,
Now asks a crystal ball to cool her hands;
Begs me, grown wroth, to cheapen ivory dice,
And Sacra Via's glittering trash"—

and were fain to win her smiles by lavish presents from the fancy-ware shops of that frequented lounge,

—it was labour lost in the poet to preach to one, who weighed her lovers by their purses, of Romulean simplicity, or to sigh—

"Would none were rich in Rome, and Cæsar's self
Could be content in straw-built hut to dwell!
Our girls would then ne'er barter charms for pelf,
But every home of hoary virtue tell."
—(III. vii.) C.

Yet he could not forbear to address her ever and anon in verses, now complimentary, now spiteful, and not seldom a mixture of both in pretty equal proportions. One of his complaints against her is that she dyes her hair and paints her face; for which, in an exaggerated strain of fault-finding, he likens her to the "woad-stained Britons." * When in the same passage he vows vengeance against those "who dye their own or wear another's hair," he testifies to the prevalence of a mistaken resort to hair-dyes on the part of the fair sex in all ages, as well as, we may add, to the consensus of the lords of the creation against such disfigurement of nature's gifts; yet it is just possible, from several hints here and there in the Elegies, that Cynthia was driven by the inroads of time to these resorts. According to one reading of El. xxiv. 6 in the third book, her poet represents her as "treading with aging foot the Appian Way;" and there are several other passages which render it probable that she was older than Propertius, whom we know that she predeceased: if so, it was in

* III. ix. 6.

keeping with her character and avocations that she should repair the ravages of time, and seek to disguise her grey hairs and her crow's-feet. Whatever her years, however, her spell must have been more than commonly lasting; for seldom have a lover's verses recorded so many and diverse endeavours to win, retain, or recover his mistress's good graces, as the first four books of the Elegies of Propertius. And this in spite of several drawbacks which usually estrange or impair love. Though he had saws and instances by the score to quote against the abuse of wine, Cynthia is an exception to the general rule:—

"Though beauty fades, and life is wrecked by wine,
Though wine will make a girl her love forget,
Ah! how unchanged by cups this maid of mine!
Unspoilt, unhurt, drink on,—thou'rt beauteous yet!

Whilst low thy garments droop towards the bowl,
And with unsteady voice thou read'st my lay,
Still may the ripe Falernian glad thy soul,
And froth in chalice mellower every day."
—(III. xxv.) D.

Though he is ever more or less a prey to jealousy not without foundation, and suffers no slight pangs from stumbling upon her in company with those convenient "cousins" whom all flirts from time immemorial have "loved in a sisterly way"—

"Sham cousins often come, and kiss thee too,
As cousins always have a right to do;"
—(II. vi. 7, 8.)

or, worse still, from learning that he is excluded for the sake of a rich and stupid prætor from Illyria, of whom he writes—

"From the Illyrian land the other day
Your friend the prætor has returned, I learn,
To you a fruitful source of welcome prey,
To me of inexpressible concern.

. . . . . .

Yet reap the proffered harvest, if you're wise—
And fleece, while thick his wool, the silly sheep;
And when at last in beggary he lies,
For new Illyrias bid him cross the deep"—
—(III. vii.) C.

in spite of these provoking rebuffs and infidelities, the poet still courts and sighs for his inconstant charmer; and whether she be near or far, follows her in fancy and with the breath of cultivated song. Allowance must be made for the change of winds in the course of a love which could not be said even by courtesy to run smooth. It is a rare phenomenon to find Propertius in such bliss and rapture as the following lines betoken:—

"With me if Cynthia sink in longed-for sleep,
Or spend the livelong day in dalliance fain,
I see Pactolus' waters round me sweep,
And gather jewels from the Indian main.

My joys then teach me kings must yield to me;
May these abide till Fate shall close my day!
Who cares for wealth, if love still adverse be?
If Venus frown, be riches far away!"

Much oftener he is (if we are to believe him, and not to set down his desperate threats and bemoanings to an appeal for pity) on the eve of a voyage, to put the sea between himself and the faithless one. There is strong reason to suspect that these voyages never came off, and that the poet's lively pictures of shipwreck were drawn from imagination rather than experience. But it was a telling appeal to herald his departure, picture his perils, and reproach the fair one with her indifference :—

As airily thou trimm'st thy locks as thou didst yester-morn,
And leisurely with tireless hands thy person dost adorn ;"

and not less effective to return to the subject, after the supposed disaster had occurred, with a slight infusion of generous blame towards himself. There would have been infinite pathos in the elegy which follows, if only it had been founded on facts. But it was a dissuasive to Cynthia's fickleness, not the description of a *fait accompli* :—

"Rightly I'm served, who had the heart to fly!
To the lone halcyons here I make my moan:
Nor shall my keel its wonted port draw nigh—
Adrift on thankless shore my vows are thrown.

Nay, more! the adverse winds espouse thy side!
Lo! in rude gusts how fiercely chides the gale!
Will no sweet Peace o'er yon wild tempest ride?
Must these few sands to hide my corpse avail?

Nay, change thy harsh complaints for milder tones!
Let night on yonder shoals my pardon buy.
Thou wilt not brook to leave unurned my bones:
Thou wilt not face my loss with tearless eye.

Ah! perish he who first with raft and sail
The whirlpools of a hostile deep essayed!
Liefer I'd let my Cynthia's whims prevail,
And tarried with a hard, yet matchless, maid—

Than scan a shore with unknown forests girt,
And strain mine eyes the welcome Twins to sight.
At home had Fate but stilled my bosom's hurt,
And one last stone o'er buried love lain light,

She should have shorn her tresses o'er my tomb,
And laid my bones to rest on cushioned rose,
Called the dear name above the dust of doom,
And bade me 'neath the sod uncrushed repose.

Daughters of Doris, tenants of the deep,
Unfurl the white sail with propitious hand;
If e'er sly Love did 'neath your waters creep,
Oh! grant a fellow-slave a kindly strand."

—(I. xvii.) D.

Perhaps upon the principle of *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, the theme of shipwreck was a favourite one with Propertius, who elsewhere vouchsafes to Cynthia an elegy depicting his dream of such a fate betiding her in the Ionian sea:—

"Thy vessel's shivered timbers round thee strewn,
Thy weary hands for succour upward thrown,
Confessing all the falsehoods thou hadst told,
While o'er thy matted hair the waters rolled."

It will be seen in the third line that he was not above administering a covert reproof in the midst of poetic compliments; but the latter certainly predominate, as he declares that in her extremity, as it seemed, he often feared lest

> "In the Cynthian sea,
> Sailors should tell thy tale, and weep for thee;"

and lest, if Glaucus had beheld her bright eyes as she sued for help—

> "The Ionian sea had hailed another queen,
> And jealous Nereids would be chiding thee,
> Nissæa fair, and green Cymothoë."

The dream, says the poet, became so painful, that he awoke during the imaginary operation of taking a header. But in his waking thoughts, and in contemplation of a real voyage, he volunteers to bear her company, with protestations that

> "If only from mine eyes she never turn,
> Jove with his blazing bolt our ship may burn:
> Naked, we'll toss upon the self-same shore—
> The wave may waft me, if thou'rt covered o'er."
> —(III. xviii.) C.

In another elegy of the same book we learn that her poet clearly believed that his mistress's destiny after such a catastrophe would be that of a goddess or a heroine. When an autumn and winter at Rome had endangered her life with malaria, he contemplates her apotheosis with the satisfaction of thinking of the company she will hereafter keep:—

"Thou'lt talk to Semele of beauty's bane,
Who by experience taught will trust thy tale;
Queen-crowned 'mid Homer's heroines thou'lt reign,
Nor one thy proud prerogative assail."
—(III. xx.)

On the whole, the round of topics of which Propertius avails himself for the poetic service of his lady-love is extensive enough to furnish the most assiduous lover's *vade-mecum*. He has songs for her going out and coming in. He has serenades for her door at Rome, which remind us of the famous Irish lover; he has soliloquies on her cruelty, addressed to the winds, and woods, and forest-birds; he has appeals from a sick-bed, and the near prospect of death, out of which he anon recovers, and proposes, after the manner of lovers in all time—

"Then let us pluck life's roses while we may,
Love's longest term flits all too fast away."
—(I. xix. 25.)

And there is one elegy in which he descends to threats of suicide, and another where he gives directions for his funeral, and prescribes the style and wording of his epitaph:—

"On my cold lips be thy last kisses prest,
While fragrant Syrian nard—one box—thou'lt burn;
And when the blazing pile has done the rest,
Consign my relics to one little urn.

Plant o'er the hallowed spot the dark-green bay,
To shade my tomb, and these two lines engrave:
'Here, loathsome ashes, lies the bard to-day,
Who of one love was aye the faithful slave.'"—(III. iv.)

More amusing, perhaps, than most of his expressions of poetic solicitude for this volatile flame of his, is the elegy he indites to her, when she has taken it into her head to run down to the fashionable watering-place of Baiæ, where his jealousy no doubt saw rocks ahead, though he is careful to disown any suspicions as to her conduct, and only urges in general terms that the place is dangerous. Here is his delicate caution in the eleventh elegy of the first book :—

"When thou to lounge 'mid Baiæ's haunts art fain,
Near road first tracked by toiling Hercules,
Admiring now Thesprotus' old domain,
Now famed Misenum, hanging o'er the seas;

Say, dost thou care for me, who watch alone?
In thy love's corner hast thou room to spare?
Or have my lays from thy remembrance flown,
Some treacherous stranger finding harbour there?

Rather I'd deem that, trusting tiny oar,
Thou guidest slender skiff in Lucrine wave;
Or in a sheltered creek, by Teuthras' shore,
Dost cleave thy bath, as in lone ocean cave,

Than for seductive whispers leisure find,
Reclining softly on the silent sand,
And mutual gods clean banish from thy mind,
As flirt is wont, no chaperon near at hand.

I know, of course, thy blameless character,
Yet in thy fond behalf all court I fear.
Ah! pardon if my verse thy choler stir,
Blame but my jealous care for one so dear.

Mother and life beneath thy love I prize,
Cynthia to me is home, relations, bliss;
Come I to friends with bright or downcast eyes—
'Tis Cynthia's mood is the sole cause of this.

Ah! let her, then, loose Baiæ's snares eschew—
Oft from its gay parades do quarrels spring,
And shores that oft have made true love untrue:
A curse on them, for lovers' hearts they wring."—D.

In contrast to his disquietude at her sojourn by the seaside should be read his calmer contemplation of her proposal to rusticate in the country—a poem which evinces an exceptional appreciation of the beauties of nature, to say nothing of a rare vein of tenderness. Here she is out of the way of tempters and beguilers by day and by night, afar from fashionable resorts, and the fanes and rites which cloak so many intrigues:—

"Sweet incense in rude cell thou'lt burn, and see
A kid before the rustic altar fall;
With naked ankle trip it on the lea,
Safe from the strange and prying eyes of all.

I'll seek the chase: my eager soul delights
To enter on Diana's service now.
Awhile I must abandon Venus' rites,
And pay to Artemis the bounden vow.

I'll track the deer: aloft on pine-tree boughs
The antlers hang, and urge the daring hound;
Yet no huge lion in his lair I'll rouse,
Nor 'gainst the boar with rapid onset bound.

My prowess be to trap the timid hare,
And with the wingèd arrow pierce the bird,
Where sweet Clitumnus hides its waters fair,
'Neath mantling shades, and laves the snow-white herd."

Yet even into this quiet picture creeps the alloy of jealousy. The poet concludes his brief idyll with a note of misgiving:—

"My life, remember thou in all thy schemes,
I'll come to thee ere many days be o'er;
But neither shall the lonely woods and streams,
That down the mossy crags meandering pour,

Have power to charm away the jealous pain
That makes my restless tongue for ever run
'Tween thy sweet name and this love-bitter strain:
'None but would wish to harm the absent one.'"
—(III. x.) C.

Without professing to note the stages of Propertius's cooling process—a process bound to begin sooner or later with such flames as that which Cynthia inspired—we cannot but foresee it in his blushing to be the slave of a coquette, in his twitting her with her age and wrinkles, nay, even in the bitterness with which he reminds her that one of her lovers, Panthus, has broken loose from her toils, and commenced a lasting bond with a lawful wife. According to Mr Cranstoun's calculation, the attachment between Propertius and Cynthia began in the summer of B.C. 30, and lasted, with one or more serious interruptions, for five years. The first book which he dignified with her name, was published in the middle of B.C. 28. The others, and among them the fourth, which records the decline of the poet's affections, were left unfinished at his death. In the last two elegies of the fourth book, it is simply painful to read the bitter palinodes

addressed to her whom he had so belauded. He is not ashamed to own that—

"Though thine was ne'er, Love knows, a pretty face,
In thee I lauded every various grace"—

and to declare his emancipation in the language of metaphor:—

"Tired of the raging sea, I'm getting sane,
And my old scars are quite skin-whole again."
(IV. xxiv.)

And one sees rupture imminent when he indites such taunting words as follow:—

"At board and banquet have I been a jest,
And whoso chose might point a gibe at me;
Full five years didst thou my staunch service test,
Now shalt thou bite thy nails to find me free.

I mind not tears—unmoved by trick so stale;
Cynthia, thy tears from artful motives flow;
I weep to part, but wrongs o'er sobs prevail;
'Tis thou hast dealt love's yoke its crushing blow.

Threshold, adieu, that pitied my distress,
And door that took no hurt from angered hand;
But thee, false woman, may the inroads press
Of years, whose wrack in vain wilt thou withstand.

Ay, seek to pluck the hoar hairs from their root;—
Lo, how the mirror chides thy wrinkled face!
Now is thy turn to reap pride's bitter fruit,
And find thyself in the despised one's place:

Thrust out, in turn, to realise disdain,
And, what thou didst in bloom, when sere lament:
Such doom to thee foretells my fateful strain;
Hear, then, and fear, thy beauty's punishment."
—(IV. 25.) P.

After this, one should have said there was scant opening for reconciliation; yet Mr Cranstoun, with some probability, adduces the seventh elegy of the last book in proof that Cynthia, if separated at all, must have been reunited to her poet before her death. In it Propertius represents himself as visited in the night-season by Cynthia's ghost, so lately laid to rest beside the murmuring Anio, and at the extremity of the Tiburtine Way, as the manner of the Romans was to bury. Whether he was in a penitent frame there might be some doubt, if the ghost's means of information were correct; but certainly his testimony with regard to her—

"That same fair hair had she, when first she died;
Those eyes—though scorched the tunic on her side"—

points to his presence at her death and obsequies, and, presumably, to his reconciliation, prior to that event. Not, indeed, that the ghost's upbraidings testify to much care or tenderness, on her lover's part, before or after. She hints that she was poisoned by her slave Lygdamus, and that Propertius neither stayed her parting breath, nor wept over her bier:—

"You might have bid the rest less haste to show,
If through the city gates you feared to go."

But the truth was, another and a more vulgar mistress had stepped into her place:—

"One for small hire who plied her nightly trade,
Now sweeps the ground, in spangled shawl arrayed,
And each poor girl who dares my face to praise,
With double task of wool-work she repays.

My poor old Petale, who used to bring
Wreaths to my tomb, is tied with clog and ring.
Should Lalage to ask a favour dare
In Cynthia's name, she's flogged with whips of hair;
My gold-set portrait—well the theft you knew,—
An ill-starred dowry from my pyre she drew."

To cruelty towards her predecessor's servants the new mistress has added, it seems, the appropriation of her gold brooch. As Mr Cranstoun acutely notes, Cynthia must have died under Propertius's roof or care, in order for him to have had the disposal of her personal ornaments; and the inference is that death alone, as the poet had often vowed in the days of his early devotion, finally and effectually severed a union so famous in song. Even the ghost, whose apparition and whose claims on her surviving lover we have given from Mr Paley's version of the fifth book, seems to rely upon an influence over him not quite extinct, where she enjoins him—

"Clear from my tomb the ivy, which in chains
Of straggling stems my gentle bones retains.
Where orchards drip with Anio's misty dew,
And sulphur springs preserve the ivory's hue,
Write a brief verse, that travellers may read,
As past my tombstone on their way they speed,
'In Tibur's earth here golden Cynthia lies;
Thy banks, O Anio, all the more we prize.'"
—(V. vii.) P.

And she vanishes with a fond assurance that, whoever may fill her place now, in a short time both will *be together*, and "his bones shall chafe beside her

bones." We have slight data as to the fulfilment of this prophecy—none, in fact, except the tradition of his early death. It is pleasant to assume that his latter years were free from the distractions, heart-aches, and recklessness of his youth, and that, as time sped, he wrapt himself more and more in the cultivation of loftier themes of song, inspired by stirring history and divine philosophy. And yet, the world of song would have lost no little had Cynthia's charms not bidden him attune his lyre to erotic subjects, and taught him how powerful "for the delineation of the master-passion in its various phases of tenderness, ecstasy, grief, jealousy, and despair, was the elegiac instrument, which he wielded with a force, earnestness, pathos, and originality most entirely his own."

CHAPTER III.

PROPERTIUS AS A SINGER OF NATIONAL ANNALS AND BIOGRAPHY.

In the ninth elegy of the fourth book, Propertius had promised, under the guidance and example of Mæcenas, to dedicate his Muse to grander and more national themes. He had encouraged the hope that he would some day—

"Sing lofty Palatine where browsed the steer—
Rome's battlements made strong through Remus slain—
The royal Twins the she-wolf came to rear—
And loftier themes than these, shouldst thou ordain:

I'll sing our triumphs won in East and West,
The Parthian shafts back-showered in foul retreat,
Pelusium's forts by Roman steel opprest,
And Antony's self-murder in defeat:"—C.

and that hope he appears to have satisfied in the latter years of his life by re-editing some of his earlier Roman poems, and enlarging the list of them by added elegies. In the first half of the first elegy of his last book appears a sort of proem to a volume of Roman 'Fasti,' to which were to belong such elegies as "Vertumnus,"

"Tarpeia," the "Ara Maxima" of Hercules, and the "Legend of Jupiter Feretrius," and the "Spolia Opima," as well as such stirring later ballads of the empire in embryo as the "Battle of Actium." It would seem that the poet was either disinclined for his task or dissatisfied with his success; for it is probable that most of those we have enumerated are but revised and retouched copies of earlier work, whilst the gems of the book, "Arethuse to Lycotas" and "Cornelia," are in another vein, of another stamp, and, as it seems to us, of a more mellow and perfect finish. That Propertius never approached the task of historic elegy with his whole heart, or even with the liveliness and versatility with which Ovid afterwards handled kindred topics in his 'Fasti,' peeps out from the abrupt cutting short of the "Early History of Rome" in the first elegy, and the supplement to it in a wholly different vein, where we are introduced to a Babylonian seer, and made acquainted with several data of the poet's personal history. The earlier portion has been ascribed to the period before his connection with Cynthia: the latter, which is not now to our purpose, belongs to his later revision-period. Perhaps it was the grandness of the programme that eventually convinced him of its intractability; yet none can regret that the poet did not burn the half-dozen proofs of what he might have achieved as a poetic annalist or legend-weaver. To take for example the first elegy—from the version of Mr Paley, who in these Roman elegies is always accurate and often not unpoetical—there is fancy and picturesqueness in the description

of the olden abode of the founders of Rome on the Palatine, which was twice burnt in the reign of Augustus, but the commemoration of which was dear to the powers that were in Propertius's day:—

"Where on steps above the valley Remus' cottage rises high,
Brothers twain one hearthstone made a mighty principality.
By that pile, where now the senate sits in bordered robes arrayed,
Once a band of skin-clad fathers, clownish minds, their council made.
Warned by notes of shepherd's bugle there the old Quirites met;
Many a time that chosen hundred congress held in meadows wet.
O'er the theatre's wide bosom then no flapping awning swung;
O'er the stage no saffron essence cool and grateful fragrance flung.
None cared then for rites external, none did foreign gods import,
Native sacrifice the simple folk in fear and trembling sought.
No Parilia then the people kept with heaps of lighted hay,
Now with horse's blood we render lustral rites of yesterday."
—(V. i. 10-20.)

The Parilia, or Palilia, was the rural festival already described in the third chapter of the sketch of Tibullus (p. 126), and a contrast is intended here between the rude bonfire of early days and the later lustration, for which the blood of the October horse was *de règle*. The poet proceeds to surround early Rome with all the proud vaunts of its legendary history—its Dardan origin, its accretions from the Sabine warriors and

Tuscan settlers, its glory in the legend of the she-wolf:—

"Nought beyond the name to Roman nursling from his kin remains:
Save that from the wolf that reared him wolfish blood he still retains"—

a sentiment which Lord Macaulay embodies in his "Prophecy of Capys:"—

"But thy nurse will bear no master,
Thy nurse will bear no load,
And woe to them that shear her,
And woe to them that goad!

When all the pack, loud baying,
Her bloody lair surrounds,
She dies in silence, biting hard,
Amid the dying hounds."

The historic part of the elegy closes with a fine rhapsody, in which its author aspires to the glories of a nobler Ennius, and repeats his less ambitious claim to rank as the Roman Callimachus. In the second elegy of this book, Vertumnus, the god of the changing year, is introduced to correct wrong notions as to his name, functions, and mythology, with an evident *penchant* for that infant etymology which is so marked a feature in the 'Fasti' of Ovid. In the fourth—a most beautiful and finished elegy—the love-story of Tarpeia, if an early poem, has been so retouched as to make us regret that Propertius had not resolution to go on with his rivalry of "father" Ennius. It opens with a description of the wooded dell of the Capitoline hill, beneath

the Tarpeian rock where, to the native fancy, *La belle Tarpeia* still is to be seen at intervals, bedecked with gold and jewels, and dreaming of the Sabine leader for whose love she was content to prove traitress. To a stream or fountain which it enclosed she had been wont to repair to draw water for Vesta's service, and thence chanced to espy Titus Tatius, the Sabine leader, engaged in martial exercises. With no sordid thirst of gold, as the Tarpeia of Livy, but smitten by the kingly form, the maiden lets Vesta's fire go out in her preoccupied dreams:—

"Oft now the guiltless moon dire omens gave,
Oft to the spring she stole her locks to lave:
Oft silver lilies to the nymphs she bare,
That Roman spear that handsome face might spare:"

and so often did she brood and soliloquise over her comely knight, that at last her scheme of treachery took form and substance, and the rural festival, which was Rome's founder's holiday, afforded meet opportunity for her betrayal of the city by the secret postern, from which she found daily egress:—

"To slack the watch the chief his guards had told,
The trump to cease, the camp repose to hold.
Their time is hers: Tarpeia seeks the foe,
The contract binds, herself the road to show.
The ascent was hard, the feasters feared no fraud,
The barking dogs are silenced by the sword:
Fatigue and wine brought slumber: Jove alone
Wakes that the traitress may her crime atone.
The gate is opened, passed; the fort betrayed;
The day of marriage chosen by the maid.

But Rome's proud foeman is by honour led:
'Marry,' he cried, 'climb thus my royal bed!'
He spoke: his comrades' shields upon her thrown,
She sank o'erwhelmed—meet treachery for her own.
From him, the sire, the rock received its name:
He lost a daughter, but he gained a fame."
—(V. iv. *ad fin.*) P.

Treachery akin to Tarpeia's is familiar to the readers of the legends of many lands; and there is in the Norman-French legend of "Fulk Fitzwarin" in our own chronicles an account of the capture of Ludlow Castle, or Dynan, through the treachery of one Marion de la Bruere, who was led to it by a secret passion for a captive knight, Sir Ernald de Lisle.*

We must barely glance at the two poems in which Propertius, with the same eye to early topography and to explanatory etymology, recounts the legends of Hercules and Cacus, and the origin of the title of Jupiter Feretrius. The former poem has a fine parallel in the eighth book of the 'Æneid;' the latter strikes the reader as an early effort of the poet, which would scarcely have been missed if it had not survived. With the foundation by Hercules of the Ara Maxima after his punishment of Cacus for stealing the oxen of Geryon, he connects the low part of the city called the Velabrum (where he and his oxen rested, and near which Cacus plied his nefarious trade), through the sails (*vela*) which the first inhabitants used to navigate the swamp. The so-called Forum

* See Chronicle of Ralph de Coggeshall, p. 275 *et seq.*—Master of the Rolls' Series.

Boarium of local topography is referred to the lowing herds in the verses:—

> "My oxen, go, my club's last toil,
> Twice sought for, twice the victor's spoil.
> Give tongue, my beeves, the sounds prolong:
> Hence men shall celebrate in song,
> For memory of my matchless might,
> The Forum from ox-pastures hight."
> —(V. ix. 15-20.) P.

And the refusal of the maidens of the cell and spring of the Bona Dea to admit Hercules to approach, when athirst, the precincts which no male might enter under pain of blindness, is made the immediate cause of his dedicating a mighty altar, turning the tables on the other sex, and serving by its consecration to commemorate the hero's Sabine title of "Sancus."

It may be a fair question whether these learned etymologies are as attractive an element in Propertius's poetry as the phases of his love, or the praises of Mæcenas and Augustus, to say nothing of the laments over Pætus and young Marcellus. Of the same fibre as these last-named elegies is the "Battle of Actium," in the fifth book,—a sort of Epinician poem of a date near the end of our poet's life, on the occasion of the quinquennial Actian games established by Augustus. As if in act to sacrifice, the poet assumes the functions of a priest, and prefaces his song of triumph with all the concomitant ceremonies which Callimachus introduces into his hymns. Our quotation shall be taken from Mr Paley's translation—when it is fairly launched, a sample of descriptive poetry of high merit:—

"A gulf called Phœbus' Bay retires on Athamanian shores
Where pent within the Ionian wave no longer chafes and roars.
Here memories meet of Julian fleet, of deeds at Actium done,
Of safe and easy entrance oft by sailors' offerings won.
'Twas here the world's vast armies met; the pine-built galleys tall
Seemed rooted in the sea, but not one fortune favoured all.
The one Quirinus, Troy-born god, had with his curse pursued,
Nor brooked the thought of Roman fleets by woman's lance subdued.
On that side Cæsar's fleet, the sails well filled with breezes free,
And standards that in many a fight had flown victoriously.
Moved now the fleets, in crescents twain, by Nereus' self arrayed:
The sheen of arms upon the waves in dimpling flashes played.
Then Phœbus from his Delos came, and bade it wait awhile
Nor dare to move: for angry winds once bore that floating isle.
On Cæsar's ship astern he stood, and ever and anon
A wondrous sight, a wavy light as from a torch there shone.
No flowing locks adown his neck the vengeful god had brought,
Nor on the shell to wake the spell of peaceful music sought,
But as with looks of death he glared on that Pelopid king,
And caused the Greeks their dead in heaps on greedy pyres to fling;

Or when he scotched the Python-snake, and all the might disarmed
Of those huge serpent coils, which erst the unwarlike Muse alarmed." —(V. vi. 15-36.) P.

Here, as in the address of Phœbus from the stern of Augustus's galley, the poet is quickened to a fire and enthusiasm which befits his subject, and of which the accomplished scholar from whom we have quoted is not insensible. In one line of it, the sentiment,

"It is the cause that overawes or lends the soldier might,"

is an anticipation of Shakespeare's adagial lesson,

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;"

and the bard's conclusion takes the form of pervading festivity, whilst it merely glances at the principal military exploits of Augustus, and hints that he should leave some "fields to conquer" to his sons.

Yet after the taste of this heroic vein already given, it would be hard to part with Propertius upon ground where there is little room for his rare gift of pathos. And so two beautiful elegies which exhibit him at his best, and in his tenderest mood, have been kept to the last. The one is the letter of Arethuse to her husband Lycotas on a campaign; the other the imaginary appeal of the dead Cornelia to her husband Paullus. The first is proof positive that Ovid does not deserve the credit which he claims in his 'Art of Love' of having originated the style of poetry which we know as Epistles; and Ovid never wrote anything so really pathetic and natural. Of both we are fortunate in having free yet adequate translations in graceful verse

by a late scholar and man of affairs and letters, Sir Edmund W. Head, to which we give the preference in presenting them to English readers. For "Arethuse to Lycotas" it has been suggested with probability that we might read in plain prose "Ælia Galla to Postumus," since in the twelfth elegy of the fourth book Propertius has addressed verses to the latter on his leaving his wife for an expedition against the Parthians. The question is unimportant. It suffices that the love-letter in the fifth book is a copy of the lorn bride's heart-pourings, very true to nature in its struggle between the pride of a soldier's wife and the love and jealous misgivings of a doting woman :—

"Men tell me that the glow of youthful sheen
No longer on thy pallid face they see :
I only pray such changes in thy mien
May mark the fond regret thou feel'st for me.

When twilight wanes and sinks in bitter night,
I kiss thy scattered arms, and restless lie,
And toss complaining till the tardy light
Hath waked the birds that sing of morning nigh.

The scarlet fleece, when winter evenings close,
I wind on shuttles for thy warlike weeds ;
Or study in what course Araxes flows,
And how the Parthians press their hardy steeds.

I turn the map, and struggle hard to learn
Where God hath placed the land and where the sea,
What climes are stiff with frost, what summers burn,
And guess what wind may waft thee home to me."

The simple expression of her lonely days, and the little lap-dog that whines for its master sharing her bed by night,—of her dread lest her lord should rashly provoke some single combat with a barbarian chief, and of her delight could she see him return safe, triumphant, and heart-whole,—are unmatched by anything in Propertius, unless it be the elegy on the premature death of Cornelia, in which she is supposed by the poet to console her widower husband, Æmilius Paullus, the censor and friend of Augustus. The theme had elements of grandeur in Cornelia's ancestry (she was daughter of P. Cornelius Scipio and Scribonia), and in the vindication, as from the dead, of her fair fame and due place among honoured elders, which had seemingly been unjustly assailed. Cornelia died in 16 B.C.; and if the poet's death occurred in B.C. 15, we may take this elegy, as it would be pleasant to do, as his swan's song. It is not, like many poems of Propertius, prodigal of mythology and Roman annals, yet it appeals to both with force and in season. Where the speaker proclaims her blameless life and high descent before the infernal judges, she opens with the boast—

"If any maid could vaunt her sires in Rome,
Ancestral fame was mine on either side:
For Spain and Carthage decked with spoil the home,
Where Scipio's blood was matched with Libo's pride."
—E. W. H.

And afterwards she pleads her readiness to have subjected her character and innocence to such tests as

those of the famous Vestals, Claudia and Æmilia (the former the mover of a vessel that had foundered in Tiber, the latter rekindler of Vesta's fire with her linen robe), if it needed

> "Judge or law to guide
> One in whose veins the blood of all her race
> Swelled with the instinct of a conscious pride,
> And bade maintain a Roman matron's place.'

In other stanzas breathes the distinctive pride of a mother who has borne sons to inherit an ancient lineage, and of a wife, who, even in death, has cherished her ambition of winning honour. But the climax of pathos is in the last verses, where she addresses her husband and children in order:—

> "Be careful if thou e'er for me shalt weep
> That they may never mark the tears thus shed:
> Let it suffice thyself to mourn in sleep
> The wife whose spirit hovers o'er thy bed:
>
> Or in thy chamber, if thou wilt, aloud
> Address that wife as if she could reply:
> Dim not our children's joys with sorrow's cloud,
> But dry the tear, and check the rising sigh!
>
> You too, my children, at your father's side
> In after years a step-dame if you see,
> Let no rash word offend her jealous pride,
> Nor indiscreetly wound by praising me.
>
> Obey his will in all: and should he bear
> In widowed solitude the ills of age,
> Let it be yours to prop his steps with care,
> And with your gentle love those woes assuage.

I lost no child: 'twas mine in death to see
Their faces clustered round: nor should I grieve
If but the span of life cut off from me
Could swell the years in store for those I leave."
—E. W. H.

It is meet to part from Propertius with this lay on his lips, which might make us fain to believe what, in truth, the facts and probabilities appear to forbid—the story of Pliny that, after Cynthia's death, the poet contracted a lawful union, and transmitted to a lawful issue the inheritance of his name and genius. It is pretty certain that the poems to Cynthia are the chief memorial and representatives of these; and indeed the sole, if we were to except the two exquisite poems last quoted, one or two others to his patrons, and a song *apropos* of his "Lost Tablets." His comparatively early death allows us, by the light of a brief but brilliant life, to conceive what he might have been. His extant books, and the loving pains bestowed on them by commentators and translators, have been of use in picturing, in some measure, the man and the poet as he was.

THE END.

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